







LECTURES,
HISTORICAL, DOCTRINAL, AND PRACTICAL,
ON THE
CATECHISM
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

"It is a great error to think, that the Catechism was made for children only ; for all Christians are equally concerned in those saving truths which are there taught : and the doctrine delivered in the Catechism is as proper for the study, and as necessary for the salvation, of a great doctor, as of a weak Christian, or a young child." Br. KEN's Directions for Prayer.—Prose Works, p. 339.

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CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

IN answering the call for a Second Edition of the following work, it is due to the Right Reverend Author, to take this opportunity of publicly stating, that neither time nor distance has diminished his interest in the welfare of his former parish, so feelingly expressed in the original Preface. Though dead indeed to them in body, this new impression of the Lectures will be a lasting evidence, that in heart and spirit he is still identified with them. Amidst the distracting cares of an extensive diocese, and the paramount claims of a distressed population, too scantily provided with the outward means of grace, he has not been unmindful of those whom he has left behind. With a liberality which will call forth the gratitude of generations beyond the present, he has devoted the proceeds of this Second Edition for the benefit of the same House of Prayer, which his own untiring exertions were instrumental in erecting: and it will be a cause of thankfulness to him to know, that the crowded

congregations which still assemble in the little Chapel, and the increasing number of communicants, bear a gratifying testimony to the correct judgment which originated the design, and the spirit of Christian perseverance which, amidst many difficulties, was enabled to carry it to completion.

It is only necessary to add, that, in the revision of the work, the marginal references throughout have been carefully verified, and the few, and comparatively unimportant errors, which had crept into the text, corrected.

E. P.

ASH VICARAGE, WINGHAM,
Sept. 17th, 1844.

DEDICATION.

TO HIS GRACE,

WILLIAM,

(BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE)

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,

Before your Grace can have seen these pages, my footsteps will have been turned from my native land, in all probability, for ever. If, with the consciousness upon me that we shall never more meet in this world, I were to suffer my feelings to have their full scope, I should speak much, and gratefully, of your Grace's unwearied kindness to one, whose affection for your person is as deep, as his reverence for your high and holy office.

But I abstain,—partly, from the persuasion, that your Grace's humble and gentle spirit would rather listen to the tale of any one's commendation, than to that of your own; and partly, from the conviction, that it were more seemly in me to confine myself to the language of dutiful respect, than to presume to offer the tribute of praise, however merited on your part and heartfelt on my own.

Suffer me then, my Lord, to lay this volume at your Grace's feet. And, with the humble prayer, that He, who has so mercifully borne up our Church throughout her many perils, may still preserve your Grace, long to watch over, and to guard her welfare,—permit me, my Lord Archbishop, to sign myself,

Your Grace's

Most grateful and dutiful Servant,

F. R. TASMANIA.

PREFACE.

IT was a deep spirit of humility that actuated one of the first theological scholars of our age, when he exclaimed, upon completing a Good-Friday exhortation, "How common-place is what I have said! It is what we all know." Such was the language of Bishop Jebb¹. And often has the same exclamation been mentally re-echoed by myself, in correcting the following sheets, as they have passed successively through the press.

I am sensibly aware that to originality, in its proper sense, this work has no pretensions. How can it?—when its subject-matter has engaged the prayers, the studies, the talents, and the pens of many a departed saint, and of many a living worthy, from the very times of the Apostles downward. My sole object has been, to be useful and instructive: and, therefore, I have studiously avoided all parade of learning, all affectation of eloquence, or of rhetoric; endeavouring merely to indicate, that there is more implied in the simple, yet comprehensive language of the Church Catechism, than would suggest itself to the mind of the ordinary reader. I have

¹ Forster's Life, Letter xi.

also been desirous to shew, how completely the doctrines of our own branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church are in accordance with those of the Primitive Church, and of the good and godly of every succeeding age. Wherever it has been possible, I have suffered every author, to whom a reference has been made, to speak for himself in his own words. If, in some instances, a thought has been borrowed from other sources, and left unacknowledged; I can but lament a memory, too keen to forget the general tenor of passages that have struck me in the course of reading,—and yet, too treacherous to recall, in every case, the name of the author, in whose writings they have occurred.

I had collected materials for a history of catechetical instruction generally, and of the Church Catechism in particular; but circumstances, over which I had no control, have prevented me from securing the leisure necessary to arrange and condense them for publication. I have the less reason to regret this, inasmuch as a task, nearly similar in design and character, has been satisfactorily accomplished by the late Rev. John Shepherd, to whose treatise on the subject the reader is referred in the Appendix.

I may, perhaps, be permitted to observe, that the work was originally composed, for the purpose of furnishing funds, in order to build a Chapel of ease in the extensive parish of Ash next Sandwich. And I must ever feel a lasting debt of gratitude to that large body of subscribers, who have come forward to aid me in this undertaking, and whose support has enabled me, under Providence, to complete a design, which has been very near my heart, from the first day of my entering upon this, my last parochial charge. Their reward will be the knowledge, that God, in His infinite mercy, has been pleased to bless our exertions with a success beyond my

warmest hopes: and I have often felt, when witnessing the crowded congregations assembled within our little Chapel, that an ample requital has been vouchsafed to me, for those many hours of toil that have been spent upon this volume.

Composed, as it was, amidst the distractions, inseparable from incessant parochial employments, and many other anxious cares that have pressed upon me, I am fully sensible of its deficiencies; and I would gladly have spent more time upon its correction, had not my duties called me elsewhere. Notwithstanding every care, some few errors have, I fear, crept into the text, and the marginal references: for these I must crave the indulgence of the reader, in the hope that they are few and unimportant.

Such as the work is, I bequeath it to my still dear parishioners, as a legacy of love from him who was once their pastor; and who, though henceforth dead to them in body, will yet be one with them in heart and spirit, until that hour (or rather beyond it) when his soul shall be re-demanded by Him who gave it. I bequeath it, as a parting gift to those many friends, in whose remembrance I would love to dwell, and in whose prayers I would not wish to be forgotten. And I bequeath it, as a tribute of reverential affection to the CHURCH, —at the bidding of whose rulers, I go forth, in humility and faith, to take charge of a large portion of her emigrant and convict children in another hemisphere.

STISTED RECTORY, BRAINTREE,
Jan. 19th, 1843.

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Lectures

on the

Church Catechism.

Part I.

The Christian's Covenant ; or, the Baptismal Vow.

Question. What is your Name ?

Answer. N. or M.

Q. Who gave you this Name ?

A. My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism ; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

Q. What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then for you ?

A. They did promise and vow three things in my name. First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that I should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith. And thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life.

Q. Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe, and to do, as they have promised for thee ?

A. Yes, verily ; and by God's help so I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that He hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me His grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end.

LECTURE I.

2 TIM. iii. 14.

“Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of.”

LECTURE ^{I.} **WHEN** the Puritans, in the memorable Savoy Conference or 1661, objected to the Church Catechism, that it was not sufficiently full and explanatory, and suggested at the same time, amongst other things, that it would be “convenient to add somewhat particularly concerning the nature of faith, of repentance, the two covenants, of justification, sanctification, adoption, and regeneration,” the Bishops replied;—“The Catechism is not intended as a whole body of divinity, but as a comprehension of the Articles of Faith, and other doctrines most necessary to salvation; and, being short, is fittest for children and common people.”

Cardwell's
Confer-
ences, p. 327.
358.

The Catechism, then, of the Church of England was, from its first publication, intended to be a summary, rather than an exposition, of the leading points connected with the faith and duty of a Christian; containing the heads only, not the details, of all that he ought to know, to believe, to practise, and to regard for his soul's health. And thus, in five distinct parts, it treats severally, of the covenant, the creed, the duties, and the sacramental privileges of the child of God.

In the first part, which treats of the Christian covenant, we are reminded of the glorious titles with which we are invested at Baptism:—“member of Christ, child of God, inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” And, whilst we are taught, first, what we are called upon to renounce; secondly, what we are to believe; and thirdly, what we are to do;—a warning is, at least, implied, that it is perfectly possible for us to lose our claim to these titles, by refusing or neglecting to perform the duties imposed upon us by their possession.

The Christian's obligation to fulfil the conditions of his baptismal vow is next admitted by the catechumen, accompanied by an expression of hearty thanksgiving that it has pleased God to call him "to this state of salvation," through Jesus Christ our Saviour; a state, that is, not merely of salvability,—not limited to the enjoyment of all the necessary means of salvation,—but one in which by the merits, and through the mediation of Christ, the grace of God's Holy Spirit is actually imparted to him; a state which may indeed be "departed from," and even lost by his own wilful negligence, or as wilful sin:—but yet one which "can be preserved, by exercising, with fidelity, the grace he has received, and by imploring the throne of grace for fresh supplies; and which, if so preserved, will infallibly terminate in everlasting peace." It is thus that weapons are placed in his hands, wherewith he may be enabled to "fight against sin, the world, and the devil." But, as Saul's armour was profitless to David, because he had not proved it; his sword useless, in that he knew not how to wield it rightly; so are the *means* of grace to the Christian, unless the preventing and co-operating Spirit of grace teaches him to appreciate them adequately, and to apply them as he ought. And therefore the Christian is taught, in his Catechism, to pray unto God, to give him His grace, that he may continue in this state of salvation unto his life's end. In this prayer, the confession is virtually made, that of himself he is unable to renounce what is hurtful to the soul, to believe what is needful for him as a child of God, or to practise what is in accordance with his Father's will, and in conformity with his own profession.

Knox's Remains, vol. i. p. 451.

Office for Baptism.

The second part contains, in the Apostles' Creed, a more particular declaration of the chief necessary points of faith; necessary, because "without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Heb. xi. 6.

The third part puts before us the moral law, giving, in the very words of God, His own declarations of His requirements, and of our obligations; whilst, in a condensed epitome of the Ten Commandments, our Church reminds us of the main points of our duty towards God and our neighbour.

LECTURE 1. In the succeeding paragraph, the Catechism drops, as it were, the character of the questioner; and, in assuming that of the teacher, lays down two fundamental truths. First, that, however necessary it may be to walk in God's commandments, we cannot do these things of ourselves; we require the special grace of God to enable us to "add to our faith virtue," so that we may be "neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, again, the Catechism speaks in the spirit of Scripture, in reminding us, that "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves," but that all "our sufficiency is of God." Secondly, it teaches us how we may gain this needful grace of God; not by one or two agonized cries of "Lord, Lord," wrung from us through the overpowering sense of the pressure of our infirmities, but by "*diligent* prayer;" the petitioner bearing in mind, the while, Christ's gracious promise, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

2 Pet. i. 5.
Ib. 8.

2 Cor. iii. 5.

Matt. xxi.
22.

The declaration of these truths forms the introduction to the fourth part, which treats of prayer. And here our dependence upon God for all things needful, as well for the body as the soul, being thus distinctly acknowledged,—when the Christian, feeling his own insufficiency to pray aright, would fain say with the first followers of Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray," as John also taught his disciples," he finds placed before him our Lord's comprehensive form of prayer; and then the Church adds her own brief exposition of, or commentary upon, it.

Luke xi. 1.

But God, in His mercy, has not left us dependent upon prayer alone, as a means of spiritual communion with Him; there are other channels of grace, whereby He brings us to Himself, and permits us at once to exercise our faith, and to receive, even here, the fulfilment of His promise. There are the sacraments of Christ, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord; those sacred mysteries, of which the fifth and last part of the Catechism discourses.

We have, first, the position laid down, in contradistinction to the belief of the Romanist, who admits seven sacraments, that there are "two only, as generally necessary to salvation, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord." The definition of the

word "sacrament" is next given; its component parts stated and explained. The kind of grace imparted in Baptism, and the requisites for rightly receiving it, are then described, whilst the consistency of Infant Baptism is, in a few words, shown. LECTURE
I.

In like manner, with regard to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we are first told of the reason why it was ordained by Christ; then of the parts and benefits of the sacrament; and lastly, in treating of the preparation which a worthy communicant must undergo, the faith and duty of a Christian towards God, and his obligations towards his fellow-creatures, are briefly, yet clearly, laid down. Self-examination, repentance, resolutions of amendment, faith in Christ, and thankfulness for the redemption purchased for us by His death; all are considered needful, before we can be accounted "religiously and devoutly disposed," or be enabled to "take this holy sacrament to our comfort." Whilst charity, "the very bond of peace and of all virtues," is added as the cornerstone of true Christian principle, without which, although in the eyes of men we might have an Apostle's faith and zeal, we should be as worthless as the "sounding brass or tinkling cymbal."

Collect for
Quinq. Sun-
day.

1 Cor. xiii. 1.

The Catechism begins by asking, "What is your name?" Why is this? Evidently, because this very mention of our *Christian* name brings before us the remembrance of that rite which stands at the threshold of our Christian life,—our Baptism. It is intended to remind us, that we were brought as infants to the holy font,—children of wrath, nameless, graceless; but that we quitted it incorporated members of God's household, adopted children of His elect family; with the assurance, that our souls would be received by Him according to His covenant, if He thought fit to re-demand them before the commission of any actual sin; and with the firm belief, that we are henceforth endued with the capacity of "working out our own salvation with fear and trembling;" invested too with the privilege of pleading the merits of Christ in behalf of our own want of merit; and of coming, in repentance and faith, for forgiveness of all future sins, to Him who "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He

Gal. iii. 26,
27.

Mark xvi.
16.

See Rubric
at the end of
the Office
for Baptism.

Phil. ii. 12.

LECTURE might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by
 I. the word." "I descended into the font, a sinner," says the
 Ephes. v. 25, Venerable Bede; "I arose purified; I went down the son of
 26. death, I came up the son of the resurrection; I entered in
 Bede, in Evan. the son of folly and prevarication, I returned the son of re-
 Joan. c. 3. conciliation; I stooped down the child of wrath, and ascended
 See also the heir of mercy; I was the child of the devil, but then be-
 Cyril. Cat. came the servant and the son of God."
 Lect. xx. 4.
 Myst. 2.

Riddle's
 Christian
 Antiquities,
 p. 484.

Euseb. lib.
 iv. c. 10, 11.

Euseb. ut
 sup.

In answer to the question, "Who gave you this name?" the catechumen replies, "My Godfathers and my Godmothers;" who are called also, in the language of the Church, sponsors, or sureties. It would be difficult to say, with any degree of certainty, at what period the office of sponsors was established in the primitive Church. Ecclesiastical tradition points to Hyginus as its originator. He was Bishop of Rome between the years A.D. 138—141, the ninth in succession from the Apostles. During the short period of his presiding over the Roman Church, it was assailed both by persecution and by heresy. His predecessor, Telesphorus, had closed an episcopate of eleven years with martyrdom; and Valentinus and Cerdon were drawing many away from the truth to follow cunningly devised fables. It may not be without its interest, in the absence of any positive evidence on the subject, to see how far persecution and heresy would almost naturally have led, even at an earlier period, to the institution of the sponsorial office.

It has indeed been supposed that it was nothing more than a Jewish custom engrafted upon Christian discipline; and passages, both in the Old and New Testaments, have been appealed to as supporting this view. But it does not appear that witnesses to circumcision (the type of Baptism) were required by the Jewish law; still less, that there were any who pledged themselves, as do sponsors in the Christian Church, to see that the child so circumcised should, when he came to maturity, adhere to the covenant into which he had been ushered. In the giftless ceremony of baptism at the initiation of proselytes to the Jewish faith,—a ceremony which *succeeded* circumcision,—witnesses were indeed required; but it does not appear that they were more than witnesses; they were bound by no ties, invested with no obligations. We

Horne's
 Introduct.
 vol. iii.
 p. 260, 5th
 ed.

would rather, then, look upon the office as having had its origin in the exigencies of the times. LECTURE
I.

The history of the primitive Church is written in characters of blood; and it was not long before those who were baptized into the Gospel faith experienced the worldly peril of confessing Christ crucified, and of “manfully fighting under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil.”

Office for
Baptism.

Enraged at the signal failure of all their attempts to put down the followers of the crucified Jesus; alarmed at the rapid progress of the Gospel amongst the people, and at the conversion of many even of their own body; stung also to the quick by the fearlessness with which the Galilean fishermen rebuked them for their infidelity, and cut to the heart by the success with which their most subtle disputants were confuted, the Jewish hierarchy determined at all hazards to strike a decisive blow, and to see if violence would not succeed, where threat and argument had failed. “At that time,” says St. Luke, “there was a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the Apostles.” Confined as this hostility was, in the first

Acts vi. 7.

Acts viii. 1.

instance, to the limits of Judæa, and to the jealous hatred of the Jews, it was not long before the heathen took the alarm; and, though in the disputes between the Jews and Christians, they could only, at first, look upon them as unimportant squabbles between two rival sects of the same despised people, yet the rapid advance of Gospel principles amongst the Gentiles showed them, that they too had causes both of detestation and of fear towards the growing faith. Calumnies of the most atrocious kind were industriously spread forth respecting the habits and belief of the disciples of the Cross; and they were not without their intended effect in bringing Christianity into disrepute with the people and government of Rome. And, doubtless, there were many amongst the Gentile priesthood, who would not be altogether silent when they saw their temples deserted, their sacred offices impugned, their very revenues cut off, for lack of worshippers to contribute the wonted stipend. And the uncompromising spirit of the early professors of the Faith, who unanimously refused to hold any communion with the gods of Rome, the empire, or

Burton's
Bampton
Lectures,
note 63.
Gibbon's
Hist. c. 16.
Justin
Martyr,
Apol. ii. 14.
Dial. cum
Tryph. 10.
pp. 110, 111.

Plin. Ep. ad
Traj. x. 97.
Milman's
Bampton
Lectures,
p. 275.
Gibbon's
Hist. c. 16.

LECTURE I. mankind, and resolved to be satisfied with nothing short of the extinction of paganism, would add fuel to fire, and make both the priesthood and the people more resolute in their determination to put an end to a religion, which, if suffered to advance unchecked, they had the wit to see, would soon bring into contempt the very genius of paganism itself. These were sufficient motives to justify persecution, perhaps, even to render it necessary in the eyes of the alarmed pagan. He thought he was doing both his religion and the state some service, by asserting the dignity of the one, and by preserving a powerful political engine to the other. And thus we find the pagan and the Jew going hand in hand with each other, in endeavouring to crush the infant Church of Christ.

Persecution had a twofold effect: if, on the one hand, the resolute and strong-minded became by it more determined and sturdy in asserting the truths which they had newly taken up; if it only confirmed their faith, by compelling them to give a reason for the hope that was in them; there were, doubtless, many timid spirits amongst the converts, whom persecution would tempt to save their lives by apostacy. And there were other contributing motives, which rendered a relapse into the errors that they had abandoned no improbable matter amongst the weak brethren of the Faith. The convert had much to give up in embracing Christianity. He was called upon to resign not only his religion, but, in many cases, his family, his home, his kin, his position in society. "Life was literally commenced anew in all its habits, occupations, thoughts, and feelings; often in its connexions and attachments. For the splendid temple, and public ceremony, the believer had to lurk in some obscure and secret chamber, where he might snatch his hurried and interrupted devotions; to steal out at midnight, and, when persecution was threatened, conceal himself in cemeteries and catacombs; instead of the rich and imaginative worship of his fathers, in which all the senses were dazzled and intoxicated with lamps, incense, and music, he joined in rites which were simple, both from the nature of the institution, and the poverty of the communicants. Meanness, humility, and obscurity, were the avowed characteristics of the new religion." These were sad and sore temptations to struggle against; and

it stands to reason, that the heads of the Church must have been aware of the probability of some, at least, of those who had been baptized into the faith of Christ, receding from their vows, and thus sinning away their baptismal grace. It was natural, it was becoming, that they should adopt every precaution, to be able to say, with their blessed Lord, "Of them which Thou gavest me, have I lost none;" and that they should take all care to ascertain the real character of those whom, by the sacrament of Baptism, they admitted within the pale of Christianity. It was expedient, then, not to take a man's own account of himself as conclusive; for, setting aside the deep and holy interest which they had in arriving at a real knowledge of the heart and dispositions of those who presented themselves for Baptism, there was the danger, lest the spy should enter, as a wolf into the fold, become master of their secrets, their haunts, their persons, and thus have it in his power to betray them to their Gentile or Jewish foes. They required, therefore, some, already of their body, to answer for the real conversion of the presumed neophyte; some, too, "who should serve as witnesses of the due performance and reception of the rite, and should also be sureties for the fulfilment of the engagements and promises then made."

LECTURE
I.

John xviii. 9.

Riddle's
Antiq.
p. 482.

These, then, would appear to be sufficient reasons, in those days of peril, for the Church to require the attendance of sponsors in all cases of adult Baptism; and, in the earliest ages, the generality of those who were baptized were, of necessity, adults.

Nor were there less valid reasons to induce them to adhere to the same practice in the case of infants. Baptism implies a covenant between God and man. A covenant requires some responsible persons to be at once witnesses and pledges; witnesses, that the engagement is indeed entered into, the obligations incurred, the grace promised rightly sought for; and pledges, that the party thus entering into covenant with God shall, in mature years, act up to the high privileges into which he has been ushered, and fulfil the conditions inseparable from those privileges; that he shall continue, in short, as far as their authority or counsel can effect it, "Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's

Office for
Baptism.

LECTURE end." These are reasons which will hold good in all ages;
 I. but there was another which was peculiar to a suffering and
 a persecuted Church.

In those days, the probabilities, so to speak, were not in favour of *both* parents outliving the violence of the persecutor, and of being enabled themselves to watch over the moral and religious education of their children. The Church was anxious not to lose these lambs baptized into her fold, for lack of natural protectors; and so it was a good and godly provision, that there should be some, who, in default of their parents surviving, or in case of their apostasy, might both have and exercise the right of seeing that their godchildren were "brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life." It may not be irrelevant to remark, that the obligation of the sponsors extended only to the spiritual charge of their godchildren; for, "if ever they became destitute, the burden devolved upon the Church in general, and not upon any others:" "in all cases, the Church was charged with this care, and not the sponsors, except there was some antecedent obligation."

Office for
Baptism.

Bingham's
Eecl. Ant.
b. xi. ch.
viii. § 2, 3.
Augustin.
Ep. 23 ad
Bonifac.

The obvious advantages arising from this primitive institution of sponsors ensured its continuance throughout all ages of the Church, from at least the middle of the second century, if not from a much earlier period.

The responsible duties to which sponsors pledged themselves, and the probability that, in many instances, they would be called upon to redeem, in full, the promises both of instruction and of protection which they had given, would naturally render the rulers of the primitive Church exceedingly careful that none but fit persons should be admitted to the office. Not alone were they themselves required to be in full communion with the Church; not alone were they "supposed to be acquainted with the fundamental truths of Christianity,—to know the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the outlines of Christian doctrine and morality,"—but there was a time, when they were even enjoined "to prepare themselves beforehand for the right undertaking of the office." And our Church, following the example, and guided by the counsel, of primitive times, presupposes the same qualifications to exist in all persons who

Riddle's
Antiq.
p. 487.
Dion.
Areop.
de Hier.
Eecl. c. ii.
§ 2.

offer themselves as sponsors for her children. The proof of this will be found in a reference to her formularies. The solemn appeals, the earnest exhortations which she gives to sponsors in her office for Baptism, sufficiently mark her feeling as to their requisite state of mind and real duties. How careful are her inquiries as to their renunciation of the works of the devil, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; as to their faith, their views of baptismal privileges, and baptismal duties! And she makes these inquiries with the understanding, that the sponsors are themselves true disciples, and are something more than desirous,—determined, that the infant whom they bring to Baptism should, as far as they are concerned, become, in mature years, a true believer likewise. And the concluding exhortation informs us of her judgment as to their duties: they are there reminded, that, as they are sureties that the child should “renounce the devil and all his works,” should “believe in God, and serve Him,” so they are to do their best that the pledge thus given be effectually redeemed. It is theirs to see, that, at the earliest possible period, the child be instructed in the solemn nature of his baptismal vow; theirs to ascertain, that he is “virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life;” and theirs to take care, that he be brought to receive the last solemn blessing which the Church bestows upon her children whilst in a state of spiritual nonage, namely, Confirmation. The 27th Canon of the Church is framed with a similar desire to enforce a recognition of the responsibility of the sponsorial office. It enjoins, first, that parents¹ be not admitted as sponsors for their children, because the Church would thereby lose that additional security for the child’s religious training, which, in default of parental care, it is the design of this institution to secure: and secondly, it is ordered, that the services of none but communicants be accepted; for she rightly considers it

LECTURE
I.

In the earlier ages of the Church, parents were not only admitted as sponsors for their children, but it seems to have been the universal practice, at least after the second century,—except in those cases where the parent could not present his child for Baptism. This custom appears to have been in force until the ninth century, when it was forbidden by a decree of the council of Mayence. Bingham’s *Ecl. Antiq.* b. xi. c. 8, § 2 & 10; Concil. Mogunt. Can. 55.

LECTURE ^{I.} would be a mockery of her holy ordinances, were she to accept, as sureties for the performance of baptismal obligations, persons who have themselves shown but an indifferent regard for their observance; and who, by refusing to listen to the invitation which is given "to *all* such as are religiously and devoutly disposed," are virtually self-placed amongst that class of people, whom the voice of their own Church would pronounce neither one nor the other. The *truly* religious do not question their Lord's commands, do not cavil at them, do not try to evade them; and the *really* devout cannot systematically neglect them.

Such then are the pledges, and such the duties of sponsors. It is a melancholy proof how much we have declined from the good and godly practices of the primitive Church, how much lower we stand, in point of true reverence for the real spirit of our own ordinances, when we see them disregarded at the very dawn of a child's spiritual existence, his Baptism; when we find, on the one hand, parents selecting, as sponsors for their little ones, not the good, the wise, the pious, the sound believers,—but the wealthy, the noble, the influential; and, on the other hand, sponsors undertaking an office of such varied responsibility, without the slightest intention of acting up to duties, which, if words have any meaning, and if God be not mocked with impunity, are verily and indeed imposed upon them².

Then, parents, if indeed you would have yourselves, in God's sight, faithful disciples of that branch of Christ's holy Catholic Church, which He, in His providence, has planted in your native land, be wary in your choice of sponsors. Select the most godly and the most trustworthy amongst your kinsfolk or acquaintance; consult the child's probable

² The ancients excluded from the office of sponsors, all catechumens, energumens, heretics, and penitents: that is, persons, who either were never yet in full communion with the Church, as being themselves unbaptized; or else, such as had forfeited the privileges of their Baptism and Church communion by their errors or crimes, or incapacity to assist others, who needed assistance themselves. And by some canons, persons who were never confirmed were excluded from being sponsors, both in Baptism and Confirmation.—Bingham *ut supra*.

At a council held at Auxerre, A.D. 578, monks and nuns, who had previously been received as sponsors, were forbidden to act in that capacity.—Ib. Concil. Antissiodor. c. 25.

spiritual interest in the choice, not his prospective worldly advantage; "seek first," for him, as you would for yourselves, "the kingdom of God, and His righteousness," and trust to the Lord's providence, that "all things needful shall be added" unto him. Look to those, of whose present prayers you are sure, and upon whose future care you may reasonably calculate, if God should remove you by death, or mischance, from the superintendence of your little ones. LECTURE
I.
Matt. vi. 33.

And sponsors,—remember, that you have, in the sight of God, taken upon yourselves a solemn and responsible duty; not merely paid an idle compliment, nor gone through an unmeaning ceremony, the spirit of which has become obsolete, because it has been disregarded. In the exercise of that duty, there should be no needless interference with a parent's regulations, no authoritative supervision of their instructions, no unjust questioning of their affection or their zeal. Yours is a protesting duty. If you have *good* grounds for believing that your godchildren are not being trained as Christians, not being brought up in conformity with their baptismal vow, then your course is clear: it is, to protest against such a violation of Christian principle; to endeavour to bring both child and parent to a sense of their responsibility in the sight of God. It is your *duty* thus to act; for you have voluntarily pledged yourselves, to see that they (as the Israelites were cautioned to do of old) "keep the words of this covenant and do them," that they may, with God's blessing, "prosper in all that they do." Deut. xxix.
9.

LECTURE II.

GALAT. iii. 26, 27.

“Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

LECTURE II. **THE** Catechism speaks of our Baptism as a means whereby we receive certain privileges, and are invested with certain titles. We are by it made “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven ;” acquiring thus by grace, or God’s favour, as the consequence of Baptism rightly received, a disposition and capabilities of which we are utterly devoid by nature.

The necessity of some such gift of a divine life, at the earliest possible period, will be best understood by calling to mind what is revealed to us in holy writ, respecting our unregenerate condition ; by ascertaining, in short, what man’s heart is, before God’s grace has begun to operate upon it.

Wherever, in that inspired record, this heart is spoken of, terms are used which indicate an absence of all spiritual bias, an absolute alienation from God, a distaste for communion with Him, a perverse preference of the things of this world to those of the next, a setting up of its own will in opposition to all that it knows, and hears, and reads of God’s will. One part tells us, that the heart of man is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ;” another, that “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” Our Saviour says, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” And St. Paul tells us that to this sentence there is no exception, “but that the Scripture hath concluded all under sin,” both Jews and Gentiles, “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

Nor has He been satisfied with thus recording, in general

expressions, the declaration of our sinfulness. He has opened LECTURE
II.
our eyes more fully to the extent of our guilt, by bringing before us examples of the backsliding of His chosen ones, under each dispensation; teaching us thus to distrust our own powers by the failure of those more gifted than ourselves: and so, in the sins of David, or of Solomon, in the infirmities of the Apostles, in the transgressions of the early saints, we are brought experimentally to the conclusion, so humiliating, yet so salutary to the human mind, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Ps. xiv. 3.

Well may we say, upon reading this judgment of our guilt, "If thou, Lord, shouldest *mark* iniquities, who shall stand?" for it is evident, when the same God, who thus convinces us of sin, speaks of Himself as of one who cannot "look upon iniquity," and "will by no means clear the guilty," that we could never expect to enter into His presence, with this evil bias uncorrected, with this fertile source of sin unexpelled from out our hearts. But God has given two decided proofs of His readiness to correct the one, and of His purposed will to expel the other. First, He has sent down His own Son to die for us, and so to offer up to Him "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world;" to render it no contradiction in terms for a just God to be, at the same time, a pardoning God; and secondly, He has sent down His Holy Spirit to work in our hearts a new principle of understanding and of faith; the first, enabling us to comprehend (as far as they are revealed, and within the limited compass of our minds,) the gracious designs that He has completed for our spiritual recovery; the second, engendering that docile and thankful temper, by which we stedfastly and practically believe the reality of God's pardoning mercy; that He is both able and willing "to save them to the uttermost that come unto Him, by Jesus Christ."

Ps. cxxx. 3.

Hab. i. 13.
Exod.
xxxiv. 7.

Heb. vii. 25.

How tenderly does God's compassion keep pace with our necessities, in that He has given us means whereby these inestimable blessings may be rendered available to us from our earliest years, in that His will is to take us from the very cradle into His own charge; to make us His children by Baptism, the divinely-appointed sign of regeneration, His own seal of the covenant of grace. It is thus that, at the very

LECTURE II. threshold of our existence, the Spirit of God wages war with the spirit of evil, for the possession of our souls; it is thus that, perverse as we are by nature, even in infancy, the Spirit of God begins to unbend that perversity; thus that the first softening of the heart takes place, the seed of divine life sown, the capability given to us of thinking, acting, and believing, as our Spiritual Parent would have us do.

The more detailed investigation of these mysteries will belong to the last part of the Catechism, in which we are called upon to treat of the Sacraments of Christ. At present, it will be sufficient, (after having thus laid down a general view of the blessings consequent upon Baptism, rightly received,) first, to explain the meaning of the titles which accrue to us from a due reception of the rite; next, to see how these titles bear upon our baptismal vow; then, to ascertain how our duties, our responsibilities, and our privileges, are inseparably connected with each other.

The Catechism, as we have seen, tells us, that by Baptism we receive a new name, carrying thus with us to the grave an undying memorial that we *have* been dedicated to God, *have* promised to take up His service, *have* been invested with peculiar gifts; *are* no more "our own," "but bought with a price;" and we are further endowed with titles of such an awful character, that whilst we are reminded of our high privilege in their possession, we are as forcibly warned of our responsibility, lest we disgrace them.

"Member of Christ" is the first title given to the newly-baptized. We are made so, in that we are thus ushered into a participation of the blessings purchased for us by His death: and so the baptized Christian becomes a member of that great family, of which Christ is the Head; bearing the same relation to Him by that mystical union, as the limb of the body does to the head of the body. It is thus that "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones:" for, "as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." And it is thus that we are made partakers of all the privileges belonging to Christ's Church: for "we are all one in Christ Jesus," we "are the body of Christ, and members in particular." "Baptism," says Hooker, "is a sacrament, which God hath instituted in His Church, to the end, that they, which receive

1 Cor. vi.
20.

Ephes. v.
30.
Gal. iii. 27.
Ib. 28.
1 Cor. xii.
27.
See Palmer's
Church of
Christ, vol. i.
p. 113,
3rd ed.

the same, might thereby be incorporated into Christ; and so, through His most precious merit, obtain as well that saving grace of imputation, which taketh away all former guiltiness; as also that infused Divine virtue of the Holy Ghost, which giveth to the powers of the soul their first disposition towards future newness of life.”

LECTURE
II.
Hooker's
Eecl. Pol.
b. v. 60,
§ 2.

“Child of God” is our second baptismal title, “an honour,” says St. Chrysostom, “vouchsafed to us, not through the law, but through the bath of regeneration.” We are children of God, in that we are born again, by Baptism, of water and of the Spirit. And thus, even as the same Spirit brooded over the dark mass of the yet unorganized world, and gave shape, substance, and life to that which was without form, and void and dead, so does He vouchsafe to infuse new life into the heart of man “dead in trespasses and sins:” water, the means; the Spirit, the agent; a new birth, the consequence. This is that birth from above, of which Christ spake to Nicodemus; this is that privilege to which the Apostle John alludes in the words, “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” “How can these things be?” has always been the question, from Nicodemus downward, with those who cannot believe that God effects such important works by such simple means.

Chrys. in
Galat.
ch. i. 3.

John iii. 5.
Hooker's
Eecl. Pol.
b. 5, c. 59.

Ephes. ii. 1.

John iii. 3
& 7.
John i. 12.

Ib. iii. 9.

“While I yet lay in darkness,” is the touching confession of St. Cyprian, “ignorant of my true life, an outcast from light and truth, I used to think that second birth, which Divine mercy promised for my salvation, a hard saying according to the life I then led; as if a man could be so quickened to a new life in the laver of healing water, as to put off his natural self, and keep his former tabernacle, yet be changed in heart and soul! How is it possible, said I, for so great a conversion to be accomplished, so that both the obstinate defilement of our natural substance, and old and ingrained habits, should suddenly and rapidly be put off? . . . Such were my frequent musings. But after that life-giving water succoured me, washing away the stain of former years, and pouring into my cleansed and hallowed breast the light which comes from heaven; after that I drank in the heavenly Spirit, and was created into a new man by a

LECTURE second birth,—then, marvellously, what before was doubtful
 11. became plain to me; what was hidden was revealed; what was dark, began to shine; what was before difficult, now had a way and means; what had seemed impossible, now could be achieved; what was in me of the guilty flesh, now confessed that it was earthy; what was quickened in me by the Holy Ghost, now had a growth according to God.” This is indeed to be the child of God, and to have the inworking power of His Spirit bearing witness to our spirit of the reality of our adoption. But there are those who can see the application of words like these to *some* cases of *adult* baptism, to which St. Cyprian is here alluding, but deny their relevancy to *any* case of *infant* Baptism. Is our Church wrong, then, in declaring in her Catechism, that *all* baptized persons are children of God? Is she otherwise than orthodox, in giving thanks to Him, “charitably in the case of adults, but absolutely in the case of infants, for having regenerated the child by the Holy Spirit, and for having received it as His own child by adoption?” Some will say, Yes. They will argue, that they look upon thousands and tens of thousands, thus said to be baptismally regenerated, yet who are, in no essential respect, as far as they can see, different from the unbaptized. They find them giving not the slightest evidence of their new birth, exhibiting not the faintest trace of spiritual sonship; and the conclusion drawn is, that we are not necessarily, but only accidentally, made children of God in Baptism. But surely, it is no part of Christian wisdom to fathom God’s decrees by the line of our own experience; nor of Christian humility to reduce His mysterious arrangements to the human level of cause and effect, and to deny their existence, because they are veiled from our sight, and shut up from our comprehension. Surely we may safely say, that the child is not less a child, because he is rebellious; grace is no less grace, because it is abused; a gift is no less a gift, because it is flung back to the giver in ignorance or scorn. And is the universal persuasion of the early Church on this point to go for nothing? Is the well-weighed *judgment* of the immediate successors of the Apostles, of fathers, councils, synods, of the Reformers of our own branch of Christ’s Church, all to be set aside in favour of modern *opinion*? and are those alone to be

Cyp. Treat.
i. 2, 3.

Office for
Baptism :
Knox’s Re-
mains, vol.
i. p. 281.

See Bp.
Jebb’s Prac-
tical Theo-
logy, vol. i.
p. 83.

judged right, who are anxious to explain away the very existence of one of God's most precious gifts, namely, adoption into His family, because the effects of that adoption are not invariably manifest? God's ways are not as our ways; and, as it is impossible for us to understand the reason, why so few show the decided marks of regeneration, or why we are not all so persuaded of the value and responsibility of our relationship to the Godhead, as to be willing to be led by His Spirit from the cradle to the grave,—wiser, and better, and more humble were it for the Christian to believe, with a venerable Father of the Church, that "by the price of the blood of Christ in Baptism, children are washed, freed, and saved, from original sin, which was propagated from our first parents."

LECTURE II.

Aug. cont.
Jul. Pelag.

Our third baptismal title, "inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven," is derived immediately from the second; for, St. Paul tells us, that "if" we are "children" of God, "then are we heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

Rom. viii.
17.

By entering into covenant with Him at Baptism, and by there becoming His adopted children, we receive, even as our legitimate inheritance, the prospect of that spiritual estate which Christ died to purchase for us; and into the possession of which God has promised, in due time, to place us; it being presupposed, that our dutiful conduct as children is such, as to prove to our spiritual Parent that we value His gifts, appreciate His affection, prize His counsels, and look forward with stedfast faith to our promised eternal heritage. The Apostle himself has attached this condition, making the possession of our future blessings dependent upon our present willingness to suffer with Christ: and he has given us this caution, not that we should strive to inherit through our own deserts, rather than by God's free grace; but that we should remember, that, on the one hand, personal holiness must ever be the necessary effect of the right reception of Gospel truths into the heart; whilst, on the other, God is pledged not to admit impurity and disobedience into His presence. It is true, that God, "according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away;" but

1 John ii. 6.
1 John iii. 3.
6.

Hab. i. 13.

LECTURE for whom is it reserved? only for those, who “are kept by
 II. the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be
 1 Pet. 1. revealed in the last time.”
 3-5.

These, then, are the main blessings that we receive in virtue of our Baptism; nor can we, as far as we can see, acquire them in any other manner. If we are not brought as infants to Christian Baptism, although God may not make us suffer for the negligence or want of faith in those who have had charge of us, it is clear that we can have no claim upon blessings which we inherit only by covenant; we must rest entirely upon God's uncovenanted mercy. The case, of course, is worse, if we ourselves, when arrived at years of maturity, are indifferent to the repair of such neglect. The Jew would never have considered himself entitled to receive, or even to be put in the way of receiving, the privileges which would belong to him as one of God's elect people, if he had not submitted to the rite of circumcision, which was to him the carnal badge of his profession, the outward symbol of his covenant, exactly as Baptism is to us. So, in like manner, if we refuse to enter into the Christian Church, by that simple way which Christ has Himself ordained, namely, by the door of Baptism, how can we presume to hope that titles or privileges will be thrust upon us, which are ours only in virtue of the appointed means? “It is not ordinarily,” says Hooker, “God's will to bestow the grace of sacraments on any but by the sacraments; which grace also, they that receive by sacraments or with sacraments, receive it from Him, and not from them.”

Ecel. Pol.
 b. v. 57, § 4;
 S. Basil. de
 Sp. Sanct. c.
 15; August.
 in Epist.
 Joh. tract.
 vi. 11.

But there are peculiar duties and responsibilities, which arise out of the very possession of these gifts of God, the neglect of which involves the forfeiture of all that we have gained; “for it is certain,” says Bishop Jebb, “that we do not *retain* the grace or privileges of our Christian Baptism, except so far as, in the beautiful language of the office, we are ‘stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity.’” Then, if we are sincerely anxious, not only to be “received into the ark of Christ's Church,” but to remain safe within its shelter, we must bear in mind that “he that *saith* he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to *walk*, even as He walked;” for, “if we say that we have fellowship with

Pract.
 Theol. vol. i.
 p. 81.
 S. Cyp. de
 zel. in Col.
 iii. 1. Hilar.
 in Matth.
 can. ii.

1 John ii. 6.

Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." LECTURE II.
 We must be careful to have the spirit of Christ, or we are none of His; to show forth the obedience and resignation of Christ, "for even hereunto were" we "called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps." We are warned further by the same Apostle, that, having been saved by Baptism through the resurrection of Christ, we must have "the answer of a good conscience toward God," and "no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." St. Paul, too, exhorts us to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof;" and he implies, withal, that no ordinance is, of itself, *permanently* efficacious, unless carried out in the practice, and the reality of its grace exhibited in the life. "In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith, which worketh by love." To all true members of Christ the Apostle says, "as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." In like manner, with our privilege of being members of Christ, by being incorporated into His holy Church,—it is idle to suppose that we can retain the title of Churchmen, or receive the fulness of those blessings which are conveyed to us through the medium of her ordinances, if we show no true signs of churchmanship, and bring a scandal upon our Christian profession, by neglecting to "let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven."

So, too, with our sonship. St. Paul tells us that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God:" spiritual guidance then is the test of the *continuance* of our privileges as sons, and this will be evidenced by our bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit. The duty of the son of God is to act towards Him as an affectionate child would to a tender father. There must be the child's trust in his parent; the child's cheerful anxiety to do his bidding; the child's humility, contentedness, docility, obedience; the same readiness to receive instruction, the same consciousness of ignorance; the same persuasion, that his parent is wiser than himself; that he neither can nor will mislead him. It only

LECTURE adds to our sins, if, although brought into God's family by
 II. Baptism, we show by our conduct, that we have had no desire to act as His children; no wish to live and die with any recognition of our heavenly relationship.

So also with our inheritance. St. Paul, when he tells us that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, reminds us, as we have seen, that this heritage is conditional; retained by godliness, forfeited by disobedience; assured to us by our being desirous to abide under His guidance,—held in abeyance at least, if not taken away, by our idling in that Christian race, in which, unless we are positively advancing, we must be as positively going back. Is it not so in human matters? Who would impugn the justice of a father, if, wearied by the continued undutifulness, and worn out by the obstinate rebellion of his first-born,—if, finding that pleading, warning, remonstrance, long-suffering, were equally disregarded,—he were at last to cut him off from succeeding to his natural inheritance? The rejection of Esau is an awful example to the Christian heir; “for one morsel of meat he sold his birthright.” Why? because he thought lightly of its privileges, and was indifferent to its duties. But “we know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected.” His trial was past; the forbearance of God was exhausted; he “found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” It may be so with us,—and bitter will be our agony, and heavy our self-reproach, if the consciousness of what we might have been, but for our disobedience, draws from us hereafter the mournful cry of the disinherited Esau, “hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father!” The Scriptures every where represent our ultimate claim to our inheritance as dependent on our fulfilling the conditions upon which we were received into the congregation of Christ's Church; namely, that we should not be “ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified; and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives' end.” The very nature of a covenant implies thus much; for it is always revocable, where one of the contracting parties refuses compliance with its stipulations.

Heb. xii. 16,
17.

Gen. xxvii.
38.

Office for
Baptism.

Very simple then will be the test, if we wish to ascertain LECTURE
II. whether we have sinned away our baptismal grace, and so, for the time being, are without the pale of God's covenant: or whether we are still entitled to those names which first were given us, as a pledge of God's future designs towards us. The test will be the personal effect produced upon our hearts, our lives, our conversations.

Such then, in brief, are our baptismal titles and privileges; such the main duties connected with them; such the danger of losing them; and such the test of our being in continued possession of them. Blessed indeed are they, who, when they take these things to heart, and meditate upon their spiritual prospects as mixed up inseparably with them, can truly say, "All these things have I kept from my youth up." Matt. xix.
20. Beset though they may be by the perils, the afflictions, the buffets, and the temptations of this life, it is theirs to feel that comfort from their Saviour's words, which His converted ones alone *can* feel, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And what Luke xii.
32. the testimony to their faithfulness hereafter? "These are they," says the beloved Disciple, "which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall Rev. vii.
14—17. wipe away all tears from their eyes."

LECTURE III.

ECCLESIASTES v. 4, 5.

“When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it ; for He hath no pleasure in fools : pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”

LECTURE III.
It would be a fearful delusion, and one destructive of the soul's best interests here and hereafter, if the Christian were to suppose, that every thing needful for his salvation had been done on his own part, because, by Baptism, he had been taken from the old stock of the first Adam, and grafted into that of Christ, the second Adam. The circumcised Jew knew full well, that, as “touching the righteousness which is in the law,” he was not “blameless,” unless he fulfilled the ordinances of the law. In like manner, the baptized Christian must know, that, though by God's election he has been brought within the pale of the Christian covenant, and thereby invested with baptismal titles ; yet, as there is no such thing as elected idleness, so he must be careful to keep up baptismal duties. If, too, under that law, which was but “the schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,” having only “a shadow of good things to come,” God's inspired preacher so powerfully warned his countrymen of the danger of trifling with vows made unto the Lord, we surely cannot be so short-sighted as to try to persuade ourselves that they will not be required of our souls under a more perfect covenant ; one, wherein spiritual knowledge, comforts, blessings, hopes, and privileges, are the heritage of the lowliest faithful disciple, which were withheld even from the Davids, the Solomons, the Isaiahs, and the Daniels of old time. “Therefore,” argues St. Paul, “*we* ought to give the more earnest

Phil. iii. 6.

Gal. iii. 24.
Heb. x. 1.

heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip: for, if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward," even under a comparatively imperfect revelation, "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

LECTURE
III.
Heb.ii.1—3.

We have already seen that our abiding in grace is dependent upon our being led by the Spirit of grace. Recognizing, then, this great scriptural truth as the foundation of his conduct, the Christian will not forget, that, if he expects to be led, he must be more than willing,—he must be anxious to obey. His first inquiry then will be, "To what have I promised obedience? because the measure of my obligation will, in part at least, depend upon the extent of my promise; and certainly, with less than its fulfilment, God cannot be satisfied: better were it for me that I should not have vowed, than that I should have vowed, and not pay."

The Catechism answers the question, and, in a few words, lays down the heads, first, of what we are to renounce, or *not* to do; secondly, of what we are to believe; and thirdly, of what we *are* to do. In her own language, the Christian is pledged, on his arrival at those years when he can think and act for himself, to "renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; to believe all the articles of the Christian faith; to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of his life." And this is called his "baptismal vow."

But, as few things are more dangerous than suffering the performance of so solemn a promise to depend upon vague generalities, or upon the admission of a few easy, and perhaps congenial duties, he will strive to understand in detail those positions which the Catechism has thus briefly laid down. He will endeavour, first, to ascertain who and what is that evil principle, called here "the devil;" what is his influence over him, what is his power, what are his "works."

We gather from Scripture, that the Evil Spirit, or Satan, as he is frequently termed in Holy Writ, was once one of those ministering spirits who surround the Everlasting's throne. It has pleased God to reveal to us little more than

LECTURE the bare fact, that, before the foundation of the world, some
 III. of these angels "kept not their first estate," but were disobe-
 Jude 6. dient and rebellious; wherefore "God cast them down to
 hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be re-
 2 Pet. ii. 4. served unto judgment." The chief of this rebel host was
 Satan; and though, as it appears from Scripture, the great
 body of the fallen angels are "reserved in everlasting chains
 Jude, ut sup. under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day," their
 leader is at least permitted, by the mysterious counsel of
 God, to exercise an extraordinary power over the souls of
 men. Hence, in Holy Writ he is called, amongst many other
 See Job i. names, by those of "deceiver," "murderer," "tormentor,"
 & 1 Kings xxii. 22. "our adversary the devil" (the Hebrew and Greek names
 Rev. xx. 10. combined in this expression), "who, as a roaring lion, walketh
 John viii. 44. about, seeking whom he may devour." "The hatred which
 Matt. xviii. 34. this evil spirit is represented in Scripture as entertaining
 towards mankind must be supposed to have arisen from his
 previous hostility to man's Creator and Redeemer; an hosti-
 lity, the ground of which is not discoverable by human rea-
 son, nor is it fully explained to us in the sacred Word." We
 know it best by its effects. It appears, that the devil was
 envious of the happiness of the man whom God had created
 in His own image—likened unto Him, that is, in purity of
 heart and holiness of affection, and endued with the capability
 of continuing in that likeness. He was made, even as that
 Holy One of whom Adam was the type, "a little lower than
 the angels," crowned with glory and honour, set over the
 works of God's hands, with all things put in subjection under
 his feet. The desire of Satan was to compass man's ruin,
 and so "to frustrate God's gracious purpose in his creation
 and redemption." We cannot doubt but that he chose the
 means best calculated to ensure his purpose. He found our
 first parents placed in the garden of Eden, with uncontrolled
 command, except in one point, over every thing around them.
 One thing only was withheld from them: and this, as a trial
 of their faith; as a test at once of their obedience, and their
 love. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat,"
 said God to them; "but of the tree of the knowledge of good
 and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for, in the day that thou
 eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die:" a simple and an intelli-
 gible

See Job i.
 & 1 Kings
 xxii. 22.
 Rev. xx. 10.
 John viii. 44.
 Matt. xviii.
 34.

ἄγγελος and
 διάβολος.
 1 Pet. v. 8.

Van Mil-
 dert's Boyle
 Lectures,
 vol. i. p. 24,
 5th ed.
 S. Cyprian.
 Treat. xii. 1,
 2.

Heb. ii. 7.
 Gen. i. 26.
 Ps. viii.
 4—8.

Van Mil-
 dert, ut sup.
 p. 24.

Gen. i. 28.

Gen. ii. 16,
 17.

ble command ; the sum of what was permitted, and what was forbidden, as well as the penalty attached to disobedience, clearly laid before them. As sin had not yet entered into the world, they were, of course, devoid of those passions, which are now the engines both of our temptation and our undoing. Satan took advantage then of the only opening that was offered him. He assumed the form of the serpent, and, in that guise, endeavoured, in the absence of Adam, to persuade Eve, that God was both unkind and unjust in withholding this one presumed comfort from them. Nay, he went further; he insinuated that God had put His prohibition upon false grounds; that He had kept back from her that which He knew would make her wise, and had given her wrong reasons for so doing. "Ye shall not surely die," said Satan to Eve, when she pleaded God's command and threat; "ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." LECTURE
III.

And doubtless, with these insinuations against God's truth and power, he appealed to himself as a living proof of the truth of his assertion; as one wiser than the weak one whom he endeavoured to betray; as one who had eaten, and yet had lived. She listened; she wavered; she was persuaded; she fell. "She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

Ib. 6.

"According to this account," says Bishop Horsley, "of the delinquency of our first parents, it began in infidelity, and amounted to nothing less than an apostasy from God, to join with a being evidently at variance with Him, who suggested to them a mistrust of God's goodness, and taught them to disregard His threatenings." The devil kept his promise, but only to the ear. Their eyes *were* opened; opened to their rebellion, their ingratitude, their shame, and to the host of fears that must have assailed them as the consequences of all. They *did* know good and evil; the good they had lost, the evil they had gained.

Biblical Criticism, vol. i. p. 14.

Objections have been frequently brought against this literal interpretation of the temptation and fall of man. First, it is often urged, that for the serpent to exercise the faculty of speech was an occurrence, in itself, so extraordinary, as to

LECTURE

III.

have ensured the failure of the scheme, through the surprise and fear with which Eve must have regarded so unusual an interruption of the apparently fixed order of nature¹; and upon which surprise the Scripture narrative is entirely silent. But we are to remember, that Eve was surrounded with wonders; she was living in an atmosphere of miracle; her own formation, the mysterious communion, and the audible converse which had taken place between God and herself,—the marvels that she had already witnessed, must have divested her of all astonishment or fear at any new wonder. And further, fear is a quality of mind which is the result of a fallen and corrupt nature; flowing, more or less, from that instinct which bids the natural man flee from death as the worst of human ills. Safe in God's hands, secure under His protection, innocent as yet, unconscious hitherto of lust or passion, what or whom had she to *fear*? But the form that Satan took has been considered a stumbling-block; flinging an air of extravagance and improbability upon the account, and leading us to consider the whole story as allegorical, rather than as a condensed narrative of an historical fact. We know enough of Satan's subtlety, to feel by bitter experience, that even now he adapts his temptations with wonderful skill to each individual's peculiar habit of body or of mind. In like manner, we may surely conclude, that he assumed that form, and appeared in that guise, which he *knew* was the best adapted to his purpose; and it is singular, that there was an old tradition amongst the Jews, that before the fall, the serpent was erect, gentle, and harmless, the most beautiful amongst God's creatures.

Joseph. Ant.
b. i. c. 1.

The penalty inflicted upon man was, as God declared it should be, death; and the curse pronounced upon the serpent, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat

¹ S. Chrysostom thought, that Eve conversed with the serpent without fear, because, before the fall, all created things were tame, and free from all trace of savageness, as well as under perfect subjection to our first parents. See Hom. 16, in Gen.

Archbishop Tenison supposes that Satan assumed the character of a bright and winged serpent, in which form the seraphs were accustomed to appear, as the heralds of God's will, and messengers of His commands; and that thus Eve was divested of all fear, from Satan's appearing in a well-known form. Of Idolatry, c. 14, p. 5.

all the days of thy life," was surely meant as something more than a mere punishment of the brute whose form and fashion Satan had usurped to work his purpose. Even now is the very existence of the reptile an abiding proof of God's unerring truth, a perpetual record that He is not braved with impunity. And yet, its reptile nature is an emblem of God's mercy; a symbol of the promise, given in the hour of man's heaviest degradation, that, though the mystical serpent, Satan, may, through Adam's want of faith, be permitted to be at enmity with his posterity, and to bruise his heel; the hour should come when, by the power of faith, the seed of the woman should finally crush, and triumph over his dominion.

This, then, is the history of the devil's first intercourse with man: it remains to ascertain, both what is his present power over us, and what are his works; that, forewarned, forearmed, we may, with God's help, prevail against the one, and steadfastly avoid the other.

Fallen for ever, as is Satan, from all his high spiritual *privileges*, he has yet retained much of, perhaps even all, his spiritual *knowledge*. He, even as God's angels, can look into our hearts, can watch the sparks of passion, as he fans them into an ungodly flame; can glance, even as can they, from heart to heart, from people to people, from kingdom to kingdom. If their sympathy with our weakness and our wants induces them to watch, with anxiety, over each individual sinner's progress,—to hail, with holy triumph, the first whisper of prayer that is wrung from the agony of the awakened conscience,—to rejoice "over one sinner that repenteth;" even so, his knowledge of our sinful bias is enough to tell him when and how to tempt. He, too, can search our spirits, and ascertain when they become self-robbed of heavenly guidance, because self-willed; and so, ready to receive, and to welcome his suggestions: it is thus that he rejoiceth over one sinner that yieldeth. Luke xv. 10.

Knowing, then, that there is ever going forward a struggle for the possession of the human soul, between the opposing powers of good and evil, how earnest must be the Christian's inquiry, what are those works which the devil suggests, and which are more peculiarly his own?

LECTURE
III.

In a general point of view, as all temptations to sin are from the devil, so, all acts of sin are works of the devil. "He that committeth sin," says St. John, "is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning;" and again, "in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." But it is well to reduce these general truths to matters of detail, if we wish to make them bear upon our practice.

1 John iii. 8.

As the duties of the Christian are of a twofold character, one class referring to his conduct towards his Maker, the other to his dealings with his fellow-creatures, so also are the temptations of the devil which induce him to forget those duties. Under the first head, then, are classed, as "works of the devil," blasphemy, and profaneness, neglect of God's ordinances, His Sabbaths, His sacraments, and His holy word; distaste to hold spiritual communion with Him; indifference to our soul's sanctification here, and to its acceptance hereafter. It is the devil's work to tempt us to live without God in the world; it is his aim to place us in that state of reprobation, in which our Saviour's words may be literally fulfilled in ourselves, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

John viii.
44.

And with regard to those "works" which more immediately affect our fellow-creatures; it is Satan, who suggests the lie, the slander, the strife, the lust, the envy, the malice, and uncharitableness. It is he who nerves the murderer's arm, and prompts his victims to revenge and cruelty; he who counsels the theft, the cheat, the every act and thought of selfishness. Nor is he the instigator of the grosser sins alone. There are those whom self-respect, a real love for decent and well-ordered habits, as well as some regard for religious obligations, would almost instinctively keep back from the indulgence of the worst propensities of our nature. To hint at the possibility of these apparently religious characters listening to the suggestions of the devil, and thereby performing his works, might seem an undue straining of scriptural allusions to suit a particular theory. But the eternal peace of our souls is too momentous a matter to suffer us to leave unexplored any path which

honest examination might prove to be fraught with the danger of "falling into reproach and the snare of the devil," when we think the while we are doing God a service. It is not from open vice that we are commonly most in danger. Had Satan tempted Eve with the grosser sins of appetite and passion, her delicacy would have shrunk instinctively from his suggestions; had he, instead of insinuating doubts of God's truth and kindness, boldly asked, with the infidels of David's time, "How doth God know? is there knowledge in the Most High?" the tempter, though clad as an angel of light, would have stood in his proper deformity before her, and the openness of the blasphemy would have ensured its own condemnation. But he went a more covert way to work. And so, even now, when passions quelled, lusts mortified, and evil desires hushed, give evidence of a mind subdued to the discipline of the Gospel of Christ,—when every other trace of human pride has vanished, it is the tempter's joy to infuse overweening notions of spiritual knowledge and advancement in holiness. He induces us then to compare ourselves with others, and to draw the conclusion in our own favour. He loves to have us feel, that our habits are of a holier stamp than those of many around us, and to pride ourselves upon the difference; he loves to find us making a parade of our religious duties, erecting ourselves into a kind of martyrs for the truth's sake, if sneer or ridicule should assail our sanctity. He loves all this, because he is aware, that knowledge, when unaccompanied by the "charity that edifieth," "puffeth up," instead of making us "wise unto salvation." It were indeed a vain task to attempt the enumeration of every circumstance in which we are in danger of falling into "the wiles of the devil." There is but one way effectually to resist them; it is, to be so conscious of our own weakness, as always to distrust ourselves, always to "put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." In all cases we must not only constantly "examine ourselves whether we be in the faith," but make the prayer of faith precede self-examination, remembering the counsel of the Apostle, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

LECTURE
III.
1 Tim. iii. 7.

Ps. lxxiii.
11.

1 Cor. viii. 1.

Ephes. vi.
11.

Ephes. vi.
13.

2 Cor.
xiii. 5.

1 Cor. x. 12.

LECTURE A needful warning to the advanced Christian, for it was the
III. } profound remark of a venerable Father of our Church, that
Hooker on Justification, 7. "the enemy that waiteth for all occasions to work our ruin,
hath ever found it harder to overthrow a humble sinner than
a proud saint."

LECTURE IV.

JAMES iv. 4.

“ Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ? ”

OUR Baptismal vow further obliges us to “ renounce the LECTURE
IV. pomps and vanity of this wicked world.” Appalling indeed are the threats, and awful the warnings which Scripture has given to those, who centre, if not their chief hopes, at least their chief delight, in these forbidden “ pomps and vanities.” The Gospel teems with condemnations of a worldly spirit, and with earnest cautions against its influence and indulgence. They are too explicit for those who would fain reduce Gospel revelations to the level of mystical allegories, and turn round upon the preacher with the affected wonder of the mocking Israelites, “ Doth he not speak parables ? ” It was no parable Ezek. xx.
49. that St. Paul uttered to the Galatians, “ If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” It was no dark Gal. i. 10. saying, that of St. James, in the text, “ Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” James iv. 4. St. John’s language was neither vague nor unintelligible, when he said, “ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof : but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” And it was none other than a plain and 1 John ii.
15—17. simple counsel that was conveyed in the question of Christ, “ What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? ” In these passages of Scripture (and Matt. xvi.
26. the Biblical student knows full well that many more of a

LECTURE similar character might be quoted), we have all the information that we require respecting the danger of worldly conformity, namely, alienation from God in this world, the loss of the soul in the next.

It would be needless to attempt the notice of each separate instance in which we follow after "the pomps and vanity of this wicked world." And it would be no easy matter to lay down, as applicable to all, a rule, as to how far conformity with the world is admissible, and where the Christian must stop, on his soul's peril; for, as the habits, and tempers, and propensities of men differ, so also do their temptations and their danger: thus, through the rule by which one would stand securely, another would as certainly fall.

It has been often said, that each man's conscience must be the guide, under this difficulty of arriving at any general conclusion; that, when our conscience reproves us of sin, we are guilty; when it is silent, we are innocent. A more unsafe standard could not well have been set up. Not to mention that St. Paul speaks of such a thing as "a conscience seared with a hot iron," dead, that is, to every feeling of compunction; not to mention that the Word of God no where admits the conscience as an unerring guide where the wishes or passions are concerned; it must be remembered that it is the advanced Christian whose conscience is most sensitive, most keenly alive to the spiritual dangers around him, most loud in its self-accusations for his casual frailties. But the conscience of the worldly man is so accustomed to be silenced, when it would fain reprove, that it becomes gradually tamed into submission to the indulged appetite; it ceases to speak, or, if it should happen to whisper condemnation, it is easily schooled into its wonted apathy.

We must seek a safer general guide than conscience, and, if we err not, one may be found in St. Paul's remark to Timothy, "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." Extend this maxim; apply it to the several means of enjoyment, either supposed or real, that the world presents to us. It will follow, that those pleasures, from the indulgence of which we cannot unreservedly arise and thank our Maker, those pursuits, which mar our devotions, and render us unwilling, or afraid,

to come, with an open heart, before Him, cannot be innocent, cannot be safe occupations for one, who knows that he must see his God face to face, and who hopes to abide, unproved, the issue of that awful meeting. LECTURE
IV.

To say nothing of those grosser sins, for the indulgence in which there can not only be no thanksgiving, but rather “a certain fearful looking for of judgment,” and of wrath to come; there are many usages of that class which calls itself “the world” (unconsciously assuming, as a badge of distinction, a name which, in God’s judgment, is attended by disgrace), respecting which there can be no question, how far they are identified with that worldly spirit so unequivocally condemned by Christ. The true disciple of God, then, cannot, without danger to his soul, choose as his companions those by whom these treasons against God are tolerated or adopted. Wherever any assemblage of so called Christians looks complacently upon those works of the flesh, and those sins of impurity, that are pronounced by St. Paul to entail upon their votaries exclusion from the kingdom of heaven; wherever there is an evident indisposition to exercise those fruits of the Spirit which mark out their adherent as the child of God; wherever the seriousness and scruples of the godly are ridiculed or despised; wherever a life spent in forgetfulness of God, or frittered away in a long course of fashionable frivolities, is considered as an innocent employment of the talents of time, fortune, and reason committed to our charge; wherever the Bible is a book of which a baptized Christian can confess his ignorance without being disgraced by the avowal; wherever an attention to the holy ordinances of the Church is made to depend upon the leisure, the convenience, the humour, or the opinion of those, who, by their baptismal vow, are pledged to receive them with thanksgiving, and to adhere to them without qualification;—there, at least (to select these instances out of many), there is the spirit of Antichrist revealed,—there, conformity with the world is enmity with God,—and there, the Christian cannot, without dishonour, take his place. It is there and then, that the boldness of true discipleship must be called into action; there and then, that the followers of a crucified Saviour must make for themselves a world within the world.

LECTURE
IV.

Are we then to leave that station in which God has been pleased to place us, because it may sometimes be contaminated by the presence of the ungodly? Nay, this were to abandon the performance of duty in the hope of avoiding the contact of error. It would be a setting up of human opinion in the room of Divine judgment. We are not forbidden to use the world because others abuse it, but commanded to exercise a jealous watchfulness over our intercourse with it. We are not commanded to abandon society altogether, because we cannot hold communion with some of its members. The early Christians were often placed in similar difficulties; but they were not enjoined to seclude themselves from *all* companionship with their fellows; for then, says the Apostle, "must ye needs go out of the world." Though they were Christian converts, and, as such, had new laws and new obligations, they were still Corinthian citizens, and, therefore, had old ties and old duties, which need not, of necessity, clash with their more recent vows.

1 Cor. v.
9—13.

See Wall's
note quoted
in Mack-
night in loc.

And it is so with us. Our heavenly Master has launched us, as it were, on the sea of life; enjoined us to sail onward in a certain track; given us the clearest rules by which we are to steer; appointed a certain haven as the object of our voyage; and He has, at the same time, promised, that if our faith fail not, we shall neither sink nor perish. It is not ours, then, to choose a nearer port, because the storm is loud, the waves tempestuous, the voyage perilous. Onward still must be the Christian's course; onward in faith, onward in prayer. He, who, of old time, hushed to silence the rude waters of Gennesareth, can say, with equal power, to the worldly tempest, "Peace, be still." And He *will* say it, if it be to our soul's profit; but the storm will blow on, if He sees that it bear us, though it may be somewhat roughly, to our desired haven.

Mark iv.
37—39.

It is a brave spirit, which, when placed in a certain rank in society, will defy the dictates, and run counter to the opinions of that society; and this avowedly, because they are opposed to the duties that the Word of God has laid down for the observance of the Christian. But it is incalculable the good that, with God's blessing, such a spirit may effect in a worldly circle. It will not surely be without its influence

over some, at least, of the friends or acquaintance of the decided Christian, if he can prove, by the unobtrusive power of his individual example, that the strictest views of Gospel principles are perfectly compatible with the highest position in society; and that a man is not the worse as a patriot, a courtier, a gentleman, or a statesman, simply because he is a humble disciple of a self-denying Redeemer. But, woe to that man, who swims with the stream, because he has not the moral courage to stem the torrent; woe to him, who, whilst his conscience secretly whispers of better, and warns of holier things, will join in the affected laugh at the unfashionable quality of Christian principles; woe to him, who will be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified before men, for fear that he might be ridiculed for the avowal, or be sneered at as a deserter from the ranks of the liberal and worldly wise. There will, there can, be none of this abandonment of principle, in order to escape the censure of the irreligious, none of this “loving the praise of men more than the praise of God,” if we are truly anxious to ascertain what is right, and what is wrong, with regard to our intercourse with the world. In drawing the line between permitted and unpermitted conformity with its usages and opinions, we shall be suspicious both of its judgment and of our own. We shall keep in view, that, when our baptismal vow enjoins us to renounce its “poms and vanity,” we are not to adopt its own conventional language in the interpretation of this solemn duty, but to abide by that of Scripture alone. We shall not therefore slide into habits, taking it for granted that they are free from blame, simply because they happen to be those of the society in which we move; nor shall we believe, that *crimes*, denounced as *deadly* by the voice of God, can, through any alchemy of argument, be transmuted into *trespasses*, extenuated as *venial* by the sophistry of man. We shall not be satisfied in following the example of the million, merely because it has the sanction of numbers on its side. We shall rather recollect, that the number of those who must hereafter perish under the penalty of the divine law will not abate one jot or tittle of its strictness; and it is not because we see others contented with their presumed safety, that we are to be therefore assured of our own. It will be of no avail

John xii. 43.

LECTURE to us, in the day of God's judgment, to plead, that we only
 IV. followed the usages of the world, only conformed to the practices of the society in which we had been brought up. We were pledged to examine both by the test of Scripture; and, if they could not abide the trial, to renounce them. It will be profitless, in that awful hour, to urge, that we only did as others did; that we thought our actions could not be so very wrong, when they had the sanction of national and individual custom. We shall not be judged by custom. It will make no difference in our own sentence, to bring forward what the world was in the habit of doing, but what we ourselves actually did; by our own obedience, not by that of the public, we shall stand or fall.

And are these the days when the world's practice is so pure, that we may safely think we are in the right path because it is trodden by the multitude? Alas! no: to act upon this belief would be to repeat the error of those who, in the days of Elijah, bowed the knee to Baal, because Ahab, because the mighty ones, because the people, did it. They thought, then, that numbers sanctified the crime; and so think many even now. They will sail joyously down the stream of life, in the track of those who have gone before them, instead of examining the safety of the course they have adopted. They will take the interpretation of their baptismal vow from the loose practice of the day, rather than be at the trouble of inquiring for themselves. Is their security, then, in the number of their comrades? It is a vain thought. God, who declares, that He will "gather out of His kingdom *all* things that offend, and them which do iniquity,"—God numbers not the guilty, but regards the crimes. The multitude of the disobedient did not stay the waters of the deluge, when the Almighty commissioned them to go forth, and to destroy. The numbers of the men of Sodom did not arrest the hand of the avenging angel; nor did the tens of thousands amongst His own people, who encouraged each other in their sins, retard one hour their desolation and dispersion.

But, wary as we must be in our examination, and strict in our performance of that vow which binds us to renounce the world, we must be as wary not to push our caution to a

1 Kings xix.
18.

Matt. xiii.
41.

Gen. vii. 1, 4.

Gen. xviii.
20. 23. 32.

fanatical extreme, nor to suppose that God has surrounded us with comforts, only as temptations. Even though the Christian may steadily refuse to conform to the world's abuses; though he may, for conscience' sake, forbear from yielding both his judgment and his knowledge in bondage to its perversions; he has yet his abundant share of comforts in his worldly pilgrimage. He derives his enjoyments from those imperishable sources, which fail not to him, when the springs of peace are dried up to all besides. But let them be detailed in the language of one who, in expressing his idea of what the Christian should be in all manner of conversation, insensibly drew the portrait of his own mind and character: "Rich and multiplied," says the eloquent Wilberforce, "are his springs of innocent relaxation. The Christian relaxes in the temperate use of all the gifts of Providence. Imagination, and taste, and genius, and the beauties of creation, and the works of art lie open to him. He relaxes in the feast of reason, in the sweets of friendship, in the endearments of love, in the exercise of hope, of confidence, of joy, of gratitude, of universal good will; of all the benevolent and generous affections, which, by the gracious ordination of our Creator, while they disinterestedly intend only happiness to others, are most surely productive to ourselves of complacency and peace. Little do they know of the true measure of enjoyment, who can compare these delightful complacencies with the frivolous pleasures of dissipation, or the coarse gratifications of sensuality."

Practical
View.

This is indeed a Christian's view of that part of his baptismal vow, which, whilst it permits him to use the world, implies, that his soul's salvation is in jeopardy, if he abuse it.

But it is in the closing scene of our mortal career, that the remembrance of all that we have promised, and all that we have performed, will come upon us in its full force. Whither then will the votary of this world betake himself for refuge from those accusing thoughts, which *will* whisper to the soul its too probable doom, when its trial shall have been ended, and eternity begun? To pleasure? It has lost its savour. To riches? They cannot purchase one moment's mitigation of the body's sufferings, much less become the ministers of comfort to the wounded spirit. To worldly friends? They

LECTURE will desert him in the hour of need, and leave him to die alone,
 IV. in the stillness of despair.

If it be ever given to us to behold a sight like this, to witness the dying hours of the worldly man, it must read to us an impressive lesson upon the vanity of all worldly objects of desire, as well as upon the merciful truthfulness of God's word, which implores us to renounce them. It will be to us a proof, that, even though the departing spirit may not be haunted by anticipations of God's wrath for the commission of any of the grosser sins of our fallen nature, yet that it can find no real consolation in that awful pause between life and death, from the specious plea that has buoyed it up through life; namely, that it has followed the world's course from no predisposition to vice, but from a too easy conformity to the usages and opinions of those around it. There can be no real peace, when it is even now on the wing to rejoin its parent Spirit, unless it can truly say, "I have not loved the world, neither the things of the world; because I knew that then the love of the Father could not be in me. I have not been the friend of the world; because I knew that then I must be the enemy of God: but, by the grace of God, I am what I am." It is then that the soul has no fear of meeting Christ as its Judge, because here it has received Him, blessed Him, and obeyed Him as its Saviour.

1 John ii. 15.

James iv. 4.

1 Cor. xv. 10.

LECTURE V.

I PETER ii. 11.

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”

As the more detailed consideration of the nature and effects of those “fleshly lusts,” which we are pledged to renounce, belongs to the examination of the seventh commandment, it will be sufficient, for our present purpose, to ascertain their general bearing upon our baptismal vow. LECTURE
V.

In no one respect, perhaps, has the practice of the world been suffered so completely to set aside the straightforward declarations of the Gospel, as in the case of sins of impurity. St. John tells us that the “lust of the flesh is not of the Father, but is of the world.” St. Paul declares, that one of the main objects of the revelation of the “grace of God that bringeth salvation” was, that we should “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts:” and we learn from the same authority, that God’s “will is our sanctification,” and that the reality of that sanctification is evidenced by our abstaining from “fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence,” “chambering and wantonness;” that “every one of us should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God; for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” Thus then the Scriptures lay down the fact, that God’s will can alone be accomplished in us by our abstinence from these sins; and the reason is given by St. Peter, because they “war against the soul.”

Since, then, upon the condition of our obedience in this respect, we are invested at Baptism with certain privileges and blessings, all of which are, as we have seen, revocable

1 John ii. 16.

Tit. ii. 11,
12.

1 Thess. iv.

3.
Coloss. iii. 5.
Rom. xiii.
13.

1 Thess. iv.
3—7.

Lect. ii. p. 20.

LECTURE
V. upon our disobedience, we are self-interested in examining how far we ourselves, as individuals, have striven to conform to the will of God in this respect, and how far the opinions of our own age and country go hand in hand with God's word, in condemning the sins of uncleanness.

The advance of civilization has brought with it almost a revolution in the current phraseology of the day. Time was, when things were called by their right names; and, if there was less apparent delicacy, there was, at least, more real honesty in our ordinary speech. Terms, which, some years ago, were of every day occurrence both in writings and in conversation, have now become unfashionable, and almost obsolete; so that were a man, in modern polished society, to use expressions, which formerly were both listened to and adopted by the most delicate female without a blush or a thought of wrong, he would lose, perhaps, his character as a gentleman, and, certainly, his good name as a man of taste. Nay, the consideration of these subjects is so foreign to our modern pulpits, that the very allusion to them in plain language is practically deprecated; and were the preacher of the present day to use but a tenth part of the honest phraseology of the Reformers, were he even to quote the words of the homilies of our Church, which treat of the "lusts of the flesh," he would offend, by his presumed indelicacy, more than he would win by his plainness of speech.

What have we gained by this refinement of language? Is the characteristic of modern manners a purity of thought and deed unknown to our ruder ancestors? Is our abhorrence of sins in general greater, our detestation and avoidance of sins in particular, which involve the forfeiture of delicacy, more sincere? If not, our gain has been in words alone. We have, it is true, flung a veil over the foulest passions of our nature; but if we are content to apply the specious titles of foibles and errors to sins which God pronounces debasing in their character, and deadly in their effects, it is as true that the same veil hides from our consciences the Gospel truths regarding them.

Eph. v. 6.

"Let no man deceive you with vain words," says the Apostle, "for because of these things cometh the wrath of

God upon the children of disobedience." But the world LECTURE
V.
will teach a different lesson, and pass a lighter sentence. There are thousands and tens of thousands who act and speak as if no such warnings were in existence ; and there are thousands more, whom an undue regard for the world's lax opinion on these matters will lull into a false security, or whom a nervous dread of its ridicule will keep back from avowing their conviction of their duty. Were Gospel truths invariably put forth in Gospel terms, this mischief could scarcely be as extensive as it is. Were God's plain threats of eternal vengeance for these sins as honestly and as constantly brought forward as they were in the days when a Peter or a Paul wrote and preached, we should surely find some, who would not be won by the hopes of heaven to fulfil their baptismal obligations, at least deterred from openly violating them by the fears of hell.

But it is not alone in its misuse of language, that the world is at issue with the word of God. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church that they were not to keep company, if any man that was "called a brother were a fornicator;" "with such an one," added the Apostle, they were "not to eat." It should follow then that they who call themselves 1 Cor. v. 11. Christians in this and every other country, who, in virtue of that very name, are bound, as were the Corinthians, to abide by the Apostle's judgment, would so far act upon it as to banish from their society the known fornicator, the convicted adulterer. And is it so? Nay; if we are to give the answer from our every day experience, we must rather say, that were it permitted to the holy Apostle to visit once more the scene of his former labours, again to preach, again to warn, as one who knew that he had the Spirit of God ; 1 Cor. vii.
40. even St. Paul himself, were he to use the same language to the English that he did to the Corinthian Church, would be but an unfashionable preacher, who dared to touch upon such questionable themes, and to hold up to modern society the truth-telling mirror of the Gospel.

But it may be urged, that to act strictly upon these Gospel principles, to banish from society all who are habitual transgressors in this respect, would be almost, if not quite, an impossible task in the present constitution of that society.

LECTURE
V.

Well, then, let it be remodelled, let it be weeded : better, far better were it, that the laws of society should be the laws of God, that its principles of action should be the principles of the Gospel, than that those who call themselves Christians should, from false delicacy or ignoble fear, persist in consorting with transgressors, whom the honest language of the Apostle has pronounced unfit to be tolerated as members of a religious community.

If we are tempted to ask, why is this sin made so much of? why is this one crime held to be such a bar of exclusion from a well-ordered, not to say a Christian, society? One reason may be found in the well-known fact, that society has much to learn in this respect; it is inconsistent in its estimate of human guilt. It will readily pronounce, if not a sentence of banishment, at least one of censure, upon gross offenders of another class, whilst on this head it is almost silent. The law will reach the murderer, the drunkard is no gentleman, the swearer is not well-bred, the liar is suspected, the ill-tempered man is shunned, the envious and slanderous are both hated and despised; society feels the inconvenience of their presence. But it is not so with the sensualist: provided he keeps within the conventional decencies which the world has imposed, in most cases he is neither shunned, hated, suspected, nor despised; he is not held to have forfeited his title to the character of a well-bred gentleman; nay, he is not uncommonly considered by some mothers of Christian England as a safe, an honourable, and even an advantageous companion for their, as yet, uncontaminated offspring.

But there is a deeper reason: "Know ye not," says St. Paul, appealing to our knowledge of an existing fact, rather than teaching a new truth, "know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." No language can speak more plainly, both God's will that we should be "pure in heart," and our own spiritual danger in defying that will. It tells us of the dignity of the body, and of the value of the soul of man, in the sight of his Creator; since He thinks it no dishonour to His heavenly nature to make the one His tabernacle, that He may sanctify and save

1 Cor. iii.
16, 17.
1 Cor. vi.
19.

the other. But there is no privilege without its responsibility and its peril; the peril of losing it, the responsibility of having to answer for its loss. And so it is with this. In a general sense, every cherished sin grieves that Holy Spirit who thus vouchsafes to enshrine Himself within us; and, if persisted in, it provokes Him to abandon us to the mastery of that evil One, whose service and whose possession we have coveted instead. The remark will apply more forcibly to the sins of impurity; for they, of all sins, exercise the most powerful, and, at the same time, the most ruinous influence over our bodies and our souls. It is little, very little, when compared with the soul's undoing, that wreck of the body which a long course of sensuality ensures. Disease, decay, premature feebleness, limbs emaciated, and nerves shattered, these are amongst the body's ills; curses, which, self-entailed, it carries about with it, as a sharp remembrancer to itself, and a solemn warning to others: but a more awful visitation awaits the soul. It seems to be a plain proof of God's displeasure against the indulgence of sensual passions, that the nearer we approach, in bodily habits, to the mere animal, to that we are the more likened in brutishness of mind. Were God's judgments to stop here, our degradation, one would think, were quite enough; but it goes further. When once the Spirit, grieved at a long course of impurity, departs, as refusing to dwell in the same abode with sin, the work of mischief proceeds with fearful rapidity. What marvel is it if Satan re-enters, in sevenfold strength, the empty house which has, as it were, been swept and garnished for his return? "Then cometh the devil and taketh away" the seed that has been sown by God, and nurtured by the care of parents and instructors; then comes the wish to out-argue the tender remonstrances of those who love too well, to see calmly the soul's downward progress. Then comes the earnest desire to find cavils against the truth of God's word; for, in a worldly sense, the soul is self-interested in flinging doubts against the authority of warnings, which, if established, ensure its ruin; if proven false, remove the only bar to the indulgence of its appetite. Then comes the sneer at every holy tie, the mockery at the counsels of the ministers of God, the wilful closing of the heart to every avenue

LECTURE
V.
Luke
viii. 12.

LECTURE of grace; the reckless determination to sin without remorse.

V.

Then are the awful words of Scripture realized; and what the Apostle spake of the ungodliness of the Gentile world is come to pass in a Christian land. Then is the "understanding darkened;" they are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:" "being past feeling, they give themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." This is an awful, but too faithful picture of the earthly condition of him who has "defiled the temple of God;" and thus, even in this world, is the Divine word fulfilled—"him shall God destroy." Thus is that soul, which should have been "dead unto sin, living unto righteousness, and buried with Christ, by Baptism, in His death," dead to spirituality, living in uncleanness, the Divine principle of life buried beneath a host of lusts and passions. Thus that holy volume, which to the true child of God is the very guide-book to the land of promise, becomes to the sensualist nought but the record of God's coming vengeance, the messenger of wrath, yea, even the remembrancer of hell. No marvel if he tries to shun it, and affects to disbelieve it.

Ephes. iv.
18, 19.

1 Cor. iii. 17.

Office for
Baptism.

Thus much can we say of the present condition of him who has given the rein to those passions, which God's commands, and his own promises, alike exhort him to fight against and to quell. We fain would draw a veil over the horrors and torments of the world to come. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord;" and He, according to the Apostle's testimony, "knoweth both how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished; but, *chiefly*, them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness."

Rom. xii. 19.

2 Pet. ii.
9, 10.

Earnestly then, if we regard the Lord's counsel and our soul's best interests, shall we pray, that God's assisting grace may so go hand in hand with us, that He may make our souls meet tabernacles for His indwelling. And though the devout Christian may make this prayer in all godly confidence in Him, who said, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it," the humble Christian will not forget that the preparations of the heart are not of man, but of God; our sufficiency to do these things not of ourselves, but of Him.

John xiv. 14.

Prov. xvi. 1.

2 Cor. iii. 5.

When once the prayer of faith is answered, and the believer's body becomes indeed the temple of the Holy Ghost,—if we go forth to battle with the lusts and passions that have been expelled from their old resting-place, “not trusting to our own strength or wisdom, but looking to Him to establish us in every good word and work,”—then will the confidence of the holy Paul be ours as well, and we too may say with him, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” And so, in all our struggles, we shall be “more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

LECTURE
V.Blomfield's
Prayers.2 Thess.
ii. 17.
Philip. iv. 13.Rom. viii.
37.

But if the world's temptations prevail above our vows,—if we adopt, as our guide, the conventional terms which it has invented to modify or explain away the language of the Almighty,—if its taunts, its persecutions, or its follies, be suffered to shut out the influence of all Gospel warnings,—if we too, as did Eve, listen to the tempter's voice, “Thou shalt not surely die,” when God declares, “Whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people,”—then, in that appalling hour, when we shall find, to our cost, the truthfulness of God's words and threats, at least we shall not be able to plead in our excuse, that we sinned and died unwarned. The very existence of the Bible is of itself enough of warning. Our Christian name is a perpetual remembrancer of our vows. Knowingly we shall have defiled God's temple, justly we shall be left to perish for the profanation.

Levit.
xviii. 29.

LECTURE VI.

DEUT. xxix. 29.

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God ; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever ; that we may do all the words of this law.”

LECTURE VI. WE have now arrived at the consideration of the second part of our baptismal vow, in which we profess to “believe all the Articles of the Christian faith.”

But as the foundation of all religious belief is the cordial acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, and not of man, it will be necessary to examine their nature and authority ; that so, upon a well-grounded conviction of their truth, we may “receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls.”

James i. 21.

The necessity of some such Divine revelation to teach us that which our own wisdom is unable to discover, namely, the relative natures of God and of ourselves, was evident even to the Gentile. It is one of those experimental truths which a careful examination of the uncertainty and weakness of our own judgments would compel us to feel, even if our pride were to forbid its acknowledgment. Merciful indeed is God, who has acted upon this truth, and who, in giving us the Bible, has supplied, from the stores of heavenly wisdom, an unerring standard both of faith and practice.

Its aim is so to teach us, that we may become “wise unto salvation ;” to give us a knowledge of all the attributes of the Deity, as far as they bear upon or relate to our necessities ; to reveal to us His will respecting our worldly and spiritual conduct ; to explain to us His designs towards us, both here and hereafter ; to show us, how our own duties towards Him are connected with those designs ; to instruct us in what He

has done, is doing, and intends to do respecting us, and for LECTURE
VI.
us; and to place before our eyes the leading features of His
dealings with the great mass of the world.

How undiscoverable are all these important matters by the light of human reason, let the baffled researches of the wisest heathens tell, when they endeavoured to investigate the nature and attributes of the Deity. The more reflecting amongst them felt keenly the ignorance that kept them bound to earthly knowledge, when they would fain soar heavenward; and the various theories, some impious, others absurd, all false, which they put forward concerning the “unknown God,” prove to us, beyond all controversy, the necessity of a revelation to teach them even the elements of divine truth.

Religion, of some sort, the pagans had,—for man is rarely content to live in entire independence of a Superior Being; but it was more frequently perverted to the selfish purposes of their rulers, than applied to the comforts of the people. The former were quick-witted enough to see how powerful a state-engine superstition might become, and how successfully it might be used to check those crimes, and to meet those evils, which were beyond the reach of human legislation. Hence, in part at least, their complicated systems of mythology, the peopling every grove and mountain, every fount and river, with a god, that restraints might be placed on every side, and that fear might prompt that general obedience, which the tameless spirit of man, whether Gentile, Jew, or Christian, has always shown itself unwilling to pay. Some few general principles excepted, the priesthood seem to have taught what they found expedient, rather than what they believed to be true; for, it were impossible to suppose, that they really gave credit to a thousandth part of the legends that they put forth, or that they could abstain from laughing in secret at the credulity of those, on whom they practised with impostures as injurious as they were successful.

Nor do their morals appear to have rested upon any more settled foundation. One set up this, another that system; each varied, and modified, according to the personal bias of the teacher. Hence, from the want of some one standard,

LECTURE VI. by which morality might have been measured, we find, as we might have expected, a vague and undefined estimate of right and wrong one of the most striking defects in the heathen world. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes, provided that he kept within the letter of the law, and abstained from offending against public decency, or rather that which was considered as such.

It were vain for us to inquire, why, for so many generations, the knowledge of better things, although imparted to the small community of the Jews, was shut up from the great family of the world; or why He, who has proved His love for the soul of man so passing well, should have suffered it so long to grope on in ignorance and darkness. As well may we attempt to ascertain the reason, why the coming of Him, who was to bring life and immortality to light, should have been delayed for four thousand years; why God's time was not identified with man's impatience. There are many mysteries in His method of dealing with us, too deep for our skill to fathom; and we must rest content in the assurance, that in these, and all other providential arrangements, He counselled best for the welfare of His creatures.

It has hitherto ever seemed a portion of God's purpose, to withhold a knowledge of Himself from the great bulk of mankind, and to limit His revelations to a chosen few. How far this reserve on the part of God was made to depend upon the inability or indifference of man to receive divine truths, or how far it was simply the result of His absolute will, is not for us to inquire: our business is with facts.

During the greater part of the sixteen centuries and a half that intervened between the fall of man and the deluge, it appears that the remembrance, if not the knowledge of God, remained only amongst the descendants of Seth, alone found faithful amidst a godless generation. After the deluge, Abraham was the only person to whom God made Himself known during the space of four hundred and twenty years; for the long period of two thousand three hundred and forty-seven years between the call of Abraham and the coming of Christ, the Jews, and their proselytes, were the only possessors of the knowledge of the Most High. And even now,

though God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son," two-thirds of the world's inhabitants remain, as before, in ignorance of the Gospel.

LECTURE
VI.
Heb. i. 2.

But, much as we would shrink from the arrogance of pronouncing why God has always thus revealed Himself only to His elect, we may, without presumption, venture to suggest some reasons, why the giving of a written record of His will was deferred until the time of Moses; even supposing that the art of writing was known in those earlier days. We may endeavour to show how God's supply kept pace with man's necessities.

In the infancy of the world, the Almighty was pleased to declare His will to man by word of mouth. As the need of Divine council arose, so came with it a distinct revelation to meet that need; and as His creatures knew, from His frequent communications with them, that they were always under His over-watching eye, there was no apparent want of a written document to confirm those directions, which He vouchsafed to give in person. Thus, when Cain's countenance fell, because no respect was had unto his offering, it was instantly noticed and reprov'd by God. "Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." Again, in the declaration made to Noah, that the earth was "filled with violence," and that therefore God had resolved to destroy both it and them, as well as in the personal instructions given to the patriarch, in consequence of this resolve, we trace the same distinctness of revelation and command; and therefore in this, as well as in the preceding instance, there seems to be no absolute necessity for any more precise exposition of them.

Gen. iv. 6, 7.
Gen. vi. 11.

Besides this, it should not be forgotten, that the great span of human life in those days allowed God's revelations to pass through so few hands, as actually to bring very near together the different ages to which they had to reach, and to render it difficult for man to corrupt or to forget them, except by a wilful misuse of the means of instruction that God had given him. Adam lived for nine hundred and thirty years; Methuselah was contemporary with Adam for two hundred and forty-three years; Shem with Methuselah for ninety-seven;

LECTURE and Abraham with Shem for fifty years. In strict point of ^{VI.} fact, then, there were but two intervening successions between Adam, the first child of creation, and Abraham, with whom, as with Moses, God talked face to face as a man talketh with a friend. And ample, during that period of more than two thousand years, were the opportunities of oral instruction in the will of God, if man had been willing to receive it.

We can scarcely suppose, that, throughout Adam's long life, he was slack in reproving the backslidings of his posterity, or negligent in warning them of the consequences of that sin which he was the first to introduce, and surely not the last to mourn. Powerful indeed, yea more powerful than any written words, must have been the preaching of the great father of our race. Did any doubt him, when he told them that God was pledged to mark and to punish sin? He could plead his own sad experience; he could dwell, with bitter truth, on that happy state which he had once enjoyed, and then compare it with the scenes of guilt and wretchedness around him. He could tell them of the change in the temper of his own soul; he could speak of a time, when it was of a kindred spirit with his God, pure, sinless, passionless; and he could place before them its altered nature, its bias to sin, its unholy propensities, the difficulty that he felt in bringing his body into subjection, lest, whilst he preached to them of righteousness and of judgment to come, he might become a cast-away himself. Did any question God's love for the soul of man, and His willingness to restore it upon its repentance and its faith? He could appeal to the fact of his own forgiveness. And, doubtless, this earnestness must have increased, as the guilt of his posterity advanced, as they became, through the deceitfulness of sin, more and more unmindful of his voice. As the night of his existence drew on, we can imagine our first parent working whilst it was yet day, and thinking every hour misspent, that was not passed in proving, by his warnings to others, the sincerity of his own repentance, his thankfulness for his own pardon.

If they, then, before the flood, refused (as we may well believe they did) to hearken to the voice of Adam, who could speak with an authority and knowledge second only to that of Him of whom he was the type; if they refused to take

counsel of his successors, of Methuselah for example, who LECTURE
VI. had listened to his lessons, and could teach, as one taught of no common master; if Noah, the heir, as one might say, of the wisdom and authority of both, could make no impression beyond the circle of his own family, although during one hundred and twenty years the ark was rising up before their eyes, as a growing witness to his faith and their unbelief; if all these distinct revelations failed of their intent, man telling forth the while what God had taught him, and God's Spirit itself striving with man; we can scarcely suppose, that the gift of a written word would have recalled to a sense of duty those who were deaf to all oral indications, whether of wrath or of mercy.

The same remarks will apply to the ages that intervened between the flood and the captivity of the descendants of Abraham in Egypt. From time to time the intercourse between God and His chosen ones was renewed in a manner so clear and audible, as virtually to supersede the necessity of committing His revelations to writing. The promise of a future Saviour was given severally to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and they could as soon forget their own existence, as the tenor or terms of that promise.

How far this system of audible revelation was carried on during the sojourning of the Israelites in Egypt, must for ever remain a secret in this world. Enough, however, is told incidentally, to assure us, that they were not left entirely without a voice to speak to them of their future glory, to encourage them to perseverance, to wait God's appointed time of rescue, to bear up, and bear on, cheered by that sure though distant vision of deliverance that awaited them. It is clear that Jacob's dying words were not forgotten, but that the prophecies which he uttered respecting the tribes of Israel were treasured up by their successive representatives. And since Moses, as we are told by St. Paul, "when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of *Christ* greater riches than the treasures in Egypt;" it is evident that the hope of Christ's future coming must have been cherished amongst some of

LECTURE them at least, as the greatest privilege that God had it in His
 VI. power to bestow.

Thus we see, that, through the antediluvian and patriarchal ages, a constant connexion was kept up between God and those whom He chose as the depositaries of His will, by means of audible manifestations of that will. We may further remark, that the subjects revealed were, in themselves, so few and simple, and yet so fraught with blessing and high privilege towards those to whom they were delivered, as to render forgetfulness or mistake equally impossible.

But after that the children of Israel became a distinct people, invested with a peculiar polity, the case was different. The span of man's life was shortened; and, as a necessary consequence, the histories, prophecies, counsels, and warnings, which had been handed down to them, were more liable to corruption, in that they had to pass through a greater number of mouths. Again, from their long residence in Egypt, it is next to impossible, with all the exclusiveness, both of the Jews and of their taskmasters, but that they must have imbibed some of the false notions, and been influenced by some of the superstitions, of the Egyptians. Thus, then, they were exposed to the danger of entertaining mistaken views of facts, doctrines, and principles. Further, it was God's benevolent purpose to give them laws both civil and religious, customs, ordinances, and ceremonies, of such a peculiar character, that they should not only separate them from every nation under heaven, but that their privileges and duties, as God's people, should be pressed home upon their consciences at every hour of their existence, by some ordinance or another entering into almost every social and domestic act.

The impossibility, humanly speaking, of a ritual so complicated, and of a ceremonial and moral law so minute, remaining in all their first purity, if left as a matter of tradition only, is too clear to require argument to prove it. The tendency of man to *add* to that which is laid down for him, and to be wise above that which is written, has been abundantly evidenced by the traditions engrafted upon the Jewish law by the Scribes and Pharisees; as well as by the superstitious additions made by the Roman Catholic Church to

the faith once delivered to the saints. The necessity then of the written law to the Jews, when they became a distinct nation, is evident. LECTURE
VI.

It is from this period that we date the commencement of Scripture: it was then that the Jew received an official record of all that his fathers had told him by word of mouth: it was then that Moses was commissioned (and aided by God in the execution of his task) to commit to writing much that the Jew could not know with any certainty for himself; and much that was liable both to confusion and perversion, through the ignorance of after-ages, and the natural tendency of all things to corruption. Hence, we find any false impressions, which they might have received in Egypt, corrected; their ideas simplified; their scattered scraps of knowledge, or tradition, collected, condensed, and methodized, for the instruction of all future ages.

They were taught the true account of the creation of the world; the origin of evil; the history of the antediluvian world, its birth, progress, decay, and destruction. Then were put upon record the promises given by God to Abraham, and successively renewed to Isaac and to Jacob. Then were the leading principles of the patriarchal religion ratified by their incorporation into the Jewish polity; and then it was shewn, that their worship, their sacrifices, their sabbaths, had been always in God's mind, as the shadows of better things to come, as yet unrevealed. It was thus that His compassion to them was singularly manifested; thus, that every thing was not alone done for them, but for their posterity, to wean them from idolatry. God's promises, threats, and ordinances, His mercies past, present, and to come, were delivered with such exactness, that the humblest of His creatures might never plead ignorance of their meaning. The sacred canon was invested with a peculiar degree of sanctity, and they were even constituted, in some sort, partakers of that sanctity, by being appointed its only guardians.

Nor was God's mercy limited to giving them a rule to abide by. He added means whereby they might be enabled to adhere stedfastly to it. A continual succession of prophets was maintained; each appealing to doctrines and to facts

LECTURE ^{VI.} already made known to them ; each adding to the treasures of the written word ; each, towards the end of the Jewish dispensation, becoming more explicit in doctrine, and in promise, and, we must add, in threat. At length the roll of prophecy was closed, the canon of the Old Testament completed : a pause of four hundred years was made, until a fresh and more abundant revelation should come forth ; until God, who, in times past, had spoken to them by His holy prophets, should, in later and more favoured days, speak Heb. i. 1, 2. again His will to man, through the intervention of His Son.

LECTURE VII.

ST. JOHN v. 39.

“Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life.”

HAVING thus endeavoured to ascertain the origin of Scripture, our attention is naturally turned to its general character, and its several parts. LECTURE
VII.

The holy volume is divided into two great portions, the Old and New Testaments; the former containing those sacred books which treat of the antediluvian, patriarchal, and Jewish histories, together with a series of prophetical writings; the latter speaking of the life of Christ, as well as the doctrinal, practical, and prophetical history of His early Church.

The books of the Old Testament are written in Hebrew, with the exception of some chapters in Ezra and Daniel, which are in Chaldee. The earliest of these books was that of Genesis, written by Moses at or about the time of the Exodus, B. C. 1491, or at the time of their deposit in the ark, B. C. 1451. It has been however conjectured, that the book of Job was earlier, and that it was written by Moses during his sojourn in the land of Midian, B. C. 1520. Malachi was unquestionably the latest, having been composed B. C. 397.

The Jews divided the sacred writings into three classes; first, “The Law,” containing the Pentateuch, or the five books of Moses; second, “The Prophets,” containing the books exclusively dedicated to prophecy, and the historical books in which prophecies are incidentally introduced; and third, “The Chetubim,” or “Hagiographa,” comprising the Psalms and the three books of Solomon.

By a reference to our translation of the Bible, it will be found, that, in our enumeration of the sacred writings, there

LECTURE are thirty-nine books: in the Jewish Talmud there are but
 {^{VII.} twenty-four; the two books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles,
 being reckoned respectively as single books, Ezra and
 Nehemiah being joined together, and the twelve minor pro-
 phets counted as one book. Josephus speaks of the canon
 of the Old Testament as consisting of but twenty-two books:
 a fanciful division, to correspond with the letters of the
 Hebrew alphabet. To effect this method of reckoning, in
 addition to the compression spoken of above, they joined the
 books of Judges and Ruth, and reckoned as one the Pro-
 phecies and Lamentations of Jeremiah.

Joseph.
 cont. Apion.
 1. i. § 8.

Deut.
 xxxi. 26.

We find from the book of Deuteronomy, that Moses,
 shortly before his death, gathered all Israel together, and
 then solemnly delivered to the priests the books of the law
 which he had written, with the charge that they should
 “take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of
 the covenant of the Lord their God, that it might be there for
 a witness against them.” But the sacred charge, thus com-
 mitted to the priests, was not limited to the books of Moses.
 The records of their conquests of the heathen, and of their
 first settlement in the land of Canaan, the stories of their
 triumphs and deliverances, their backslidings and their punish-
 ments, all were consigned to the same holy guardianship,
 and hither was each book committed, as it was written, until
 the days of Solomon, who, B. C. 1004, built a temple to
 Jehovah, and ordained, that there should be the sanctuary
 of God’s word, as it was the throne of His presence. As he
 enjoined “that the future compositions of inspired men should
 be secured in the same holy place, we may conclude, that the
 respective works of Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Joel, Micah, Nahum,
 Zephaniah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Obadiah, all
 of whom flourished before the Babylonian captivity, were
 regularly deposited in the temple.”

Gray’s
 Introd. p. 4.
 Tomline’s
 Theol.
 vol. i. p. 6.

2 Kings
 xxiv. 1.

About the year 606 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of
 Babylon, came up and rendered Jerusalem tributary to his
 power: from this time the “captivity” is to be dated. Seven
 years after this he came up again, rifled the temple, and
 carried to Babylon “all the treasures of the house of the
 Lord, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon,
 king of Israel, had made in the temple of the Lord.” Eleven

2 Kings
 xxiv. 13.

years passed on, when, in consequence of Zedekiah's rebellion, Jerusalem was again assailed, and, after a siege of two years, taken. The temple was destroyed and burnt; the ornaments, which former rapine had spared, were broken in pieces and conveyed to Babylon, "and Judah was carried away out of their land."

LECTURE
VII.

2 Kings
xxv. 1—21.
2 Chron.
xxxvi.
13—20.

It is remarkable that the sacred historian makes no mention of the fate of the holy writings, which were deposited within the temple. It is scarcely possible, that the guardians of so precious a charge should have taken no steps, to remove them to a place of security, upon the first alarm. In the absence therefore of any positive evidence, we may conjecture, that, as no allusion is made to the temple having been plundered at Nebuchadnezzar's first visit, the priests, warned by the previous attack, found means to secrete them at the earliest intimation of a second inroad of the Babylonians. Thus much however is certain, that the Jews, during the captivity, were in possession of a copy of the Scriptures, from whatever source procured; for we find the books of the law referred to by Daniel, Ezra, and Jeremiah.

Dan. ix.
11. 13.
Ezra vii. 14.
Jer. xvii. 19.
21. xxxii.
22. 33.
Isa. xlv. 28.
Jer. xxxiii.
7. 13.

At the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled: the Jews were restored to their own land; Jerusalem was rebuilt; the foundations of the temple once more laid; and the ritual worship, according to the Mosaic law, re-established. About fifty years after the rebuilding of the temple, Ezra, the great reformer of the Jews, collected the sacred writings, including, of course, the additions made to them during the captivity; namely, the works of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, and Zechariah. The zeal of the holy man was not lost upon the people, for they "gathered themselves together as one man," and "spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law . . . and he read therein . . . from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law."

Nehem. viii.
1—3.

"To this genuine collection, which, according to former custom, was placed in the temple, were afterwards annexed the sacred compositions of Ezra himself, as well as those of

LECTURE VII. Nehemiah and Malachi, which were written after the death of Ezra. This addition, which was probably made by Simon the Just, the last of the great synagogue¹, completed the canon of the Old Testament; for, after Malachi, no prophet arose till the time of John the Baptist, who, as it were, connected the two covenants, and of whom Malachi foretold, that he should precede 'the great day of the Lord,' that is, the coming of the Messiah. It cannot now be ascertained, whether Ezra's copy of the Scriptures was destroyed by Antiochus Epiphanes, when he pillaged the temple; nor is it material, since we know that Judas Maccabæus repaired the temple, and replaced every thing requisite for the performance of Divine worship, which included a correct, if not Ezra's own, copy of the Scriptures. This copy, whether Ezra's or not, remained in the temple, till Jerusalem was taken by Titus, and it was then carried in triumph to Rome, and laid up, with the purple veil, in the royal palace of **Vespasian.**"

Tomline's
Theol.
vol. i. p. 10.

See Gray's
Key, note,
p. 540.

The Apocryphal books are so called from a Greek word which indicates their uncertain and doubtful authority. They contain no prophecy; and, although entitled to respect, and even admiration, as possessing passages of great historical interest, as well as high poetical sublimity and energy of expression; though venerable for their antiquity, and remarkable, in many places, for their pious eloquence, they are yet devoid of any authentic mark of inspiration. They were never received into the Jewish canon; they were certainly composed after the cessation of the prophetic Spirit; and are not quoted as authority in any portion of the New Testament. They formed no part of the Septuagint translation put forth under the direction of Ptolemy: a sufficient evidence that they were not, at that period, judged canonical by those, to whom "were committed the oracles of God." They are not mentioned as inspired writings by any of the Fathers of the first four centuries, although they were very commonly read in many of the churches in primitive times as books of

Rom. iii. 2.
Joseph.
contra Ap.
lib. i. § 8.
Bingh.
Ecccl. Antiq.
b. xiv. c. 3.
§ 15.

¹ The great synagogue "was a term applied by the Jews to a succession of elders, supposed to have amounted to one hundred and twenty, who had the government of the Jewish Church after the captivity. They are said to have superintended and closed the canon of the Scriptures."—Gray's Introd. p. 7.

piety and high moral worth, and used as books of instruction for the catechumens. In later ages, respect for their antiquity seems gradually to have risen into reverence for their authority; until, at the fourth session of the Council of Trent, they were, with the exception of the prayer of Manasseh, and the third and fourth books of Esdras, formally admitted into the Roman Catholic canon, and thus placed upon the same level as inspired Scripture. Our own Church, following the example of Catholic antiquity, refuses to admit these books into her canon. She doth read them "for example of life, and instruction of manners:" not sanctioning thereby their entire exclusion, as some would have it, whose pious scruples outrun their better judgment; but still not applying them "to establish any doctrine."

LECTURE
VII.
April 8,
1546.
Decret. de
Can. Script.

Artic. vi.

With regard to the general question of the presumed authority of the Apocrypha, it should be remembered, that *all* the writings, even of men confessedly inspired, were not included in the sacred canon. This makes the distinction between what they wrote by commandment, and what by permission; between the writings, in which the pen was guided by God's Spirit in all material points, and those, wherein they were left entirely to their own choice of subject, its treatment dependent upon their own unaided powers of mind, their own talents, their own experience. Solomon, we are told, "was wiser than all men . . . he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." Of these proverbs, Solomon, doubtless, made his own selection: God directing his choice to those in which His guiding hand had been with him. Of all his songs, and all his treatises, but one of each remains. Every thing has perished, save those which he placed within the sanctuary of God's temple, as conscious that they were composed at the suggestion of the Spirit.

1 Kings iv.
31. 33.

The canon of the New Testament consists of twenty-seven books, written by eight different authors, all contemporary with our Saviour, and the majority of them members of the chosen body of the Apostles. Written as they were, in places so

LECTURE remote from each other; composed for Churches, or addressed
 VII. to persons, of such widely different characters, habits, and opinions,—some parts applicable to Jews, some to Gentiles, others to both,—it is a singular proof both of their intrinsic value, and of the assurance of the early Church of their inspiration, that so short a time elapsed before they were one and all recognized and adopted as canonical by Christians of every country. The testimony of the early Fathers of the Church, all of whom allude, more or less, to the writings of the New Testament, is most valuable; proving, beyond dispute, that they were the genuine and authentic productions of the Apostolic age.

See Tom-
line's
Theology,
part ii. c. 1.

The books of the New Testament may be divided into three classes: the historical, containing the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; the doctrinal, containing the fourteen Epistles of St. Paul, five Catholic, or General Epistles, and two by St. John addressed to individuals; and the prophetical, consisting of one book, the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

The Gospels contain, each of them, an account of the life and ministry of our Saviour: they have many points in common, yet each possesses its own distinguishing peculiarities. St. Matthew, who wrote for the use of Jewish converts, is more explicit than any other Evangelist upon those points which might be supposed to be especially adapted to arrest their attention, to conciliate their prejudices, to remove their objections, and to strengthen their faith. Thus, for example, he takes every opportunity of showing the fulfilment of prophecy with regard to the Christ; a line of argument, which, whilst it would be peculiarly satisfactory and convincing to the Jew, would have less weight with the Gentile, who could not be expected to look upon the prophetical writings with that reverential awe, which to the Hebrew nation was a feeling hallowed by the lapse of ages, and rendered still dearer by their very sufferings; for they bade them look to prophecy fulfilled in past time, as a pledge of its accomplishment in time to come. St. Matthew, then, shows, amongst many other points, how, in accordance with prophecy, Jesus was born of a Virgin, born at Bethlehem, of the race of Abraham, of the seed of David. He shows, how

Is. vii. 14.
Mic. v. 2.
Gen. xii. 3.
Ps. cxxxii.
11.

the expectation of the Jews, that their Messiah's regal character should be acknowledged by the Gentiles with rich gifts and offerings, was fulfilled by the coming of the Magi, under the guidance of the promised star, from the East to Bethlehem. He tells them of the sojourn of Jesus in Egypt, of the predicted sorrows of the mothers in Bethlehem, of the advent of John in the spirit and power of Elijah; of the preaching of Jesus in Galilee, of His performing the identical miracles which had been marked out of old as the peculiar works of the Messiah, the blind restored to sight, the lame walking, the deaf hearing. He dwells minutely upon the triumphant entry into Jerusalem. He speaks of the betrayal of Jesus by one of His own disciples for thirty pieces of silver, and the purchase of the potter's field with the money. He appeals to the scourging, the mocking, the rejection of the Sufferer: he tells them of the vinegar and gall that was offered to Him on the cross, of the parting of His garments, and the casting lots for His vesture. And he proves, that He died, as was predicted, with malefactors, yet was buried honourably, and that He rose again from the dead. St. Matthew's object is clear in thus putting before the Jews the identity of the prophetic character of the Messiah with the actual life of Jesus. For hundreds of years these prophecies had been more or less familiar to them; they were universally admitted to belong, in some mysterious manner, to their Messiah; how then could they escape from the conclusion, that He who thus literally, thus minutely fulfilled them in His own person, could be none other than the Hope of Israel? They could scarcely avoid seeing that a connected series of the prophecies brought forward by St. Matthew formed a brief epitome of the life of Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee, as they had seen and known it.

Nor is this the only point in which St. Matthew seems more especially to have kept in view the peculiar opinions of his countrymen, and to have adapted his Gospel to meet them. Not to mention the frequent allusions to Jewish customs and doctrines scattered throughout his whole Gospel, the Evangelist takes every opportunity of showing how the Scribes and Pharisees, to whom the people had habitually looked up as almost infallible teachers, were, with reference

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Is. lx. 3.
Numb. xxiv. 17.
Hos. xi. 1.
Jer. xxxi. 15.
Mal. iv. 5.
Is. ix. 1, 2.
xxxv. 5, 6.
Zech. ix. 9.
Ib. xi. 12, 13.
Is. l. 6.
lii. 3.
Ps. lxxix. 21.
Ps. xxii. 18.
Is. liii. 9.
Ps. xvi. 9, 10.

LECTURE to many of these customs and doctrines, "blind leaders of
 VII. the blind." And our Saviour's sermon on the mount (the whole of which St. Matthew alone records) may be taken, not only as a most valuable lesson upon morals and religion, but also as an elaborate exposure of the false glosses, superstitious observances, and doctrinal errors and practices of these Jewish teachers.

One point remains to be noticed. Although it was not St. Matthew's *leading* object to prove the divinity of Christ, yet this doctrinal fact is kept steadily in view throughout; so steadily, that even the heathen Celsus could see that it was expressly asserted by this Evangelist: a subject to be handled with delicacy, though with precision when speaking to Jews, who seem never to have looked for the union of the Godhead with the manhood in the person of their Messiah; and who crucified Jesus as a blasphemer, "because He made Himself the Son of God," a title in which the Jew understood a claim to divinity to be asserted.

Respecting the date of St. Matthew's Gospel there is considerable difference of opinion, although the voice of antiquity is unanimous in speaking of it as the earliest record of the life of Christ. Many, following the authority of Irenæus, who says that St. Matthew put forth a Gospel amongst the Hebrews, whilst St. Peter and St. Paul were preaching at Rome, affix to it the date of A. D. 61. Others, conceiving it improbable that the early Christians, especially the Jewish converts, would be left so long without some account of the life, ministry, sufferings, and death of Christ, assign the earlier date of A. D. 38. Perhaps, after all, both opinions may be thus far correct. There can be little question that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel originally in Hebrew, for the use of his countrymen. It is scarcely possible that the unanimous voice of ecclesiastical antiquity can be incorrect upon such a point. But it is neither impossible nor improbable, that, when the Hebrew language was rapidly falling into disuse, the Apostle translated his Gospel into Greek, as being a more generally known language. It has been conjectured that St. Paul did precisely the same thing with regard to his Epistle to the Hebrews. In this case, we may assign the earlier date to the Hebrew copy, the later to the

Cels. apud
 Origen. lib.
 i. 28.

Origen.
 cont. Cels.
 lib. ii. 31.
 Matt.
 xxvii. 43.
 John xix. 7.
 x. 33. 36.

Campbell's
 Preface to
 St. Matthew.
 Iren. adv.
 Hæres.
 lib. iii. c. 1.
 Euseb.
 Eccl. Hist.
 lib. v. c. 8.
 See Horne's
 Introd.
 vol. iv. p. 237.
 5th ed.
 Papias apud
 Euseb.
 lib. iii. c. 39.
 Origen. lib.
 lib. vi. c. 25.
 Hieron.
 Præf. in
 Evang.
 Epiphani.
 Hæc. 51. 5.
 Cyril.
 Hieron.
 lect. xiv.
 c. 15.
 Dorothei
 Eccl. Hist.
 Syn.
 Forster's
 Apostolical
 Auth. of the
 Hebrews,
 p. 34, n. 2.

Greek. The disappearance of the Hebrew original might be partly accounted for from the well-known fact of its corruption by the Ebionites, who denied the incarnation of our Lord, and then mangled the Gospel to suit their own heresy; and partly from the circumstance of the Hebrew language rapidly falling into disuse after the destruction of Jerusalem, and Greek becoming the general tongue not only of that part of Asia, but of the learned world in general. An early publication of the life of Christ by one of His immediate followers, for the express use of those who had denied and crucified Him, does certainly appear so natural, nay, so necessary a step, one that would so materially tend to confirm the faith of the first converts, that it is difficult to conceive the possibility of its having been neglected. It would seem unlikely, that the Apostles, who were professedly sent first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, would leave them to gather from hearsay, or oral tradition, a testimony to the truth of their accounts of Christ, or to their own divine mission, at a time when the opposition of the Jew, and the persecution of the heathen, might make the stoutest faith begin to waver, if unsupported by some authority to which they could appeal for the existence of the hope that was in them. Tenfold more valuable would this document be, if put forth when there were many living witnesses, to confute them if false, or to support them if true. It would seem to be the most natural course for the Apostles, to lose no time in placing before the whole body of the Jewish people every evidence to the identity of Jesus with the Messiah, whom they had been, and still were, so anxiously expecting. The testimony, more especially, derivable from prophecy, would hardly have been deferred to a time, when the Jews, troubled both within and without, were preparing for open revolt, and seeking rather to provide for any political exigency that might occur, than to reconcile the old prophecies, relating to the Messiah, with the claims of the Galilæan prophet, whom not they, but their fathers had crucified.

The second Gospel in order is considered to have been written about the year A.D. 65, by St. Mark, who was believed to be the same as "John, whose surname was Mark," mentioned

LECTURE
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On the
Ebionites,
Euseb.
l. iii. c. 27.
Burton's
Bampt.
Lect. vi.

Euseb.
l. ii. c. 15.
Acts xii.
12. 25.

LECTURE in the Acts of the Apostles, and by St. Peter and St. Paul.
VII.

1 Pet. v. 13.
Col. iv. 10.
2 Tim. iv. 11.
Euseb. ut
sup. &
1. vi. c. 14.
Hieron. de
Vir. Illust.
c. 8.

He was the friend and companion of St. Peter, and, according to the testimony of Eusebius and Jerome, composed this Gospel at the urgent request of the Christian converts at Rome, who were desirous to have in writing those lessons of the Apostle which they had heard in preaching. We find it, in consequence, more general in its character than that of St. Matthew, whom St. Mark is considered by many to have in some respects adopted as his model. It is devoid of any peculiar appeal to prophecy; free, as much as was consistent with a due regard to the clear exposition of his subject, from all reference to Jewish customs, prejudices, and opinions, which would have conveyed but little meaning to those whose spiritual edification it was intended to promote.

Coloss.
iv. 14.

Hieron.
Pref. in
Matth.

St. Luke, "the beloved physician," mentioned in St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, was the author of the third Gospel. There is sufficient internal evidence to prove, that it was written for the general use of the Gentile world; and it was published, as St. Jerome tells us, in Greece. There are circumstances noticed by this evangelist, which would be of peculiar interest to Gentile converts, excluded as they had been, in the estimation of the Jews, from partaking in the high privileges belonging to Messiah's kingdom. Thus he relates the announcement of the angel to the shepherds, that the good tidings of salvation which he brought were not addressed exclusively to them, but "to all people;" and it is he alone who speaks of the multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men;" thus pointing to that expansive love which should include all men within the pale of redemption, though, in the first instance, "Salvation was of the Jews." St. Luke also traces the genealogy of Christ, through the female line, up to Adam, to whom, as to the common father of both Jew and Gentile, the first promise of the Saviour of mankind was given; whilst St. Matthew traces it up, through the male line, to Abraham, upon whom the promise of the Messiah, as a scion of his family, was bestowed. "St. Luke was, for several years, the companion of St. Paul, and many ancient writers consider his Gospel as having the sanction of St. Paul, in the same manner as St.

Luke ii. 10.

Ib. 13, 14.

John iv. 22.

Tomline's
Theol.
vol. i. p. 325.
Euseb.
1. iii. c. 4.
Tertull. adv.
Marc.
1. iv. c. 5.

Mark's had that of St. Peter." The date usually assigned to its publication is A.D. 63, soon after St. Paul's release from imprisonment at Rome. LECTURE VII.

The object of St. John in writing his Gospel was, according to Irenæus and Jerome, and indeed we may add the voice of Catholic Antiquity, different from that of the other evangelists. In the interval which took place between the publication of the last Gospel and this, which was published probably about the year 97, many heresies had crept into the Church of Christ. They were introduced principally by those learned Greek converts to whom the simplicity of the Gospel was "foolishness," and who were probably not content to have the most unlettered ushered into the mysteries of religion as well as themselves, who had borne the toil and heat of intense study. They were desirous, therefore, of engrafting the fantasies and complicated theories of their favourite philosophy upon the faith of Christ; thus proving unconsciously the truth of Scripture, that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." Doubts and false opinions respecting the divinity and incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the creation of the world, were the leading features of the doctrines of the Gnostics, or "knowing ones," as they were called; which, however fanciful and unscriptural, had yet gained considerable ground amongst the early converts, and especially in Asia Minor. The parent of all these heresies was Simon Magus, and his opinions were soon taken up and added to by others, and amongst them by Cerinthus and Ebion. In order to refute these heresies in particular, and to stem the torrent of gnosticism in general, St. John was entreated by the Bishops of the Asiatic Churches to write his Gospel. The line of argument that he proposed to himself, in complying with their request, is sufficiently evident from his own words. "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name." Thus St. John commences with proving the divinity and humanity of Jesus. His Gospel, more than any other, is full of the discourses, and displays more at large the mind of Christ: it contains less of history, and more of doctrine, less of propheticall allusions, and more of spiritual counsels, than those of the preceding evangelists,

Iren. adv. Hæres. l. iii. c. 1. Iren. adv. Hæres. l. i. c. 23. Ib. l. iii. c. 11. Hieron. de Script. Eccl. Joan. Burton's Lectures on Eccl. Hist. Lect. xii. p. 373.

1 Cor. i. 23.

1 Cor. iii. 19.

See Burton's Bampton Lect. ii. p. 42.

Euseb. l. ii. 13. Irenæus, l. i. 23. Burton's B. Lect. iv. p. 87. Hieron. in Matth.

John xx. 31.

On the use of the term λόγος, see Burton's Bampton Lect. vii.

LECTURE VII. whose omissions indeed he is considered to have supplied. And it is this Apostle alone who records our Saviour's last discourses with His disciples on the night of His betrayal, and His intercessory prayer for the welfare and unity of the Church.

Clem. Alex.
quoted in
Euseb.
l. vi. 14.

The Acts of the Apostles were written by St. Luke; and this work "forms a central or intermediate book to connect the Gospels and the Epistles. It is an useful postscript to the

Percy's Key. former, and a proper introduction to the latter." It comprises the leading features of early church history, throughout a period of thirty years. It tells us of the first preaching of the Apostles, of the earliest existing regulations respecting the Church, and of the establishment of Christianity in Asia and Europe. St. Luke appears to have kept two objects in view throughout the whole of his history. First, to shew

Percy's Key. the fulfilment of Christ's promise of the coming of the Holy Ghost, by the exhibition of those superhuman powers which enabled the Apostles to "speak with the tongues of *men* and

Cor. xiii. 1. of *angels*," and to work miracles as a corroborative testimony to the divine truth of their words. Secondly, to prove that God's purposed mercy in Christ Jesus extended to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, and that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." This was a truth, the bare mention of which during our Saviour's life-time was sufficient to set all the old prejudices of the Jews in array against Him, and which required the intervention of a special vision from heaven, before it was fully brought home to the conviction of St. Peter himself. The whole work must not be looked upon as a complete history of those years over which the narrative extends; but rather as an account of some of the most important incidents in that period, and of the most remarkable passages in the Life of St. Paul.

Acts x.
34, 35.

The Epistles were written by the several Apostles whose names they bear. One indeed, that to the Hebrews, has caused much dispute as to its authorship: but the question is at last set at rest, and the master-hand of St. Paul traced throughout in a series of learned and convincing arguments.

See Forster's
Apostolical
Authority of
the Ep. to the
Hebrews.

Some of these letters contain answers to special questions upon doctrine and discipline, as the first Epistle to the

Corinthians, which may be taken as a reply by St. Paul to a report sent to him by the heads of the Church at Corinth, as to the existing state of that Church. It is the Bishop's charge to his loved yet erring flock. Others, again, are chiefly doctrinal, as the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews. Some, besides those already mentioned, are addressed to single Churches, as the Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Thessalonians. One is written with the intention of its being forwarded from Church to Church, as that to the Colossians. Some are letters to individuals, as those to Titus, Timothy, Philemon, and the second and third Epistles of St. John. Others are addressed to the whole body of Christians, as the Epistles of St. James, St. Peter, St. Jude, and the first of St. John.

LECTURE
VII.
Col. iv. 16.

These works are peculiarly interesting, as giving us much information respecting the state of the primitive Church; its controversies, its heresies, its persecutions, its backslidings, its fidelity, its discipline and usages. But there is a more abiding profit to be derived from their study than mere interest. It is here that we may learn to become wise unto salvation; the great doctrine of the Atonement, shadowed out rather than fully revealed in the Gospels, is here brought clearly forward, expanded, explained. Nay, every doctrine, upon which our salvation depends, is here elucidated: the corruption of our nature,—the guilt that we have engrafted upon that old stock of Adam,—the remedy which God's mercy has provided for both in the offering made by Christ,—our individual responsibility, and general privileges,—the need of the Spirit of grace to work in us a good will, and to work with us, when we have that will,—the assurance of His help in answer to the prayer of faith,—rules of life and conduct,—the relative duties between man and man,—our present position and our future prospects,—all, in short, that can teach, or warn, or encourage, or establish the Christian, is here laid down, and passes in review before the holy writers.

The Canon of the New Testament closes with the Apocalypse or Revelation of St. John, which was written by that Apostle, during his exile in Patmos, an island in the Ægean sea. As this circumstance, according to Eusebius, took place

LECTURE VII. in the latter part of the reign of the Emperor Domitian, the date of this work is probably either A.D. 96 or 97.

Euseb. l. iii.
c. 18.
Burton's
Lect. on
Eccl. Hist.
xii. p. 373.

"Its contents are of a prophetic nature, and they exhibit a series of visions, descriptive of very important events, that were to succeed in the course of ages. Many ingenious and learned men have undertaken to illustrate this sacred book, and even to point out very precisely the particular events predicted by its inspired author; but their success has not always been answerable to their sanguine expectations. Perhaps a complete and perfect commentary must be reserved for future ages, when many of the events have taken place, which are predicted in it, but remain at present unaccomplished."

Percy's Key.

There are, however, those who consider that these prophetic visions relate entirely to the early ages of Christianity, and were meant as warnings and cautions to the primitive Church. Whatever may be the soundness of these opinions, thus much, at least, is certain: that the study of this portion of God's word, which many neglect as mystical, and others decry as unpractical, cannot be enforced in stronger language, than in the words of St. John himself, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand."

Rev. i. 3.

LECTURE VIII.

2 TIM. iii. 16.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

THREE points remain to be considered, as connected with the establishment of the authority of the Scriptures; their genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration. LECTURE
VIII.

We have already seen, in the preceding Lecture, the jealous care with which the Jews regarded the preservation of the sacred canon; and how, as each book was written, it was deposited within the sanctuary. We have also noticed the preservation of the entire canon during the captivity; and how, upon the restoration of the Jews to their native land, Ezra once more replaced the holy volume within the temple, adding to its contents the several books that were written during the captivity. We have seen too how the sacred canon closed with the prophet Malachi, when a pause was made in God's revelations to man; when the roll of prophecy was folded, and the voice of the seer silent, until the coming of Christ should unfold the full mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. Vid. sup.
Lect. vii.

The Jewish polity continued for nearly five hundred years after the time of Ezra; and during that time not only were copies multiplied by means of the scribes, but a complete and faultless original was preserved in the temple, with which all transcripts might be compared. The very eagerness with which the Jews looked forward to the coming of Christ (the grounds for that expectation based, not upon tradition, but exclusively upon Scripture), would have been a sufficient guarantee for the retention of the sacred volume in all its purity; as upon that alone their every hope rested,—to that every sect appealed. Hence the smallest variations from the

LECTURE VIII. received canon would have been instantly detected, and as instantly exposed. Our Saviour, too, who so strongly condemned the false glosses which the Scribes and Pharisees put upon Scripture, thus "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," so far from rebuking them as unfaithful to their trust, advocated their authority as guardians of the sacred canon. "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." And St. Paul, whose early education and peculiar training in the schools of the Pharisees must have singularly fitted him to detect interpolations or corruptions in the Scriptures, never once hints at the existence of either: and when he speaks of the Jews, as those unto whom were committed the oracles of God, he never insinuates that they perverted those oracles.

After the dispersion of the Jews, and the downfall of their civil and religious polity, the Christians were equally anxious with them to establish the authority, and to preserve the purity, of the sacred text. They looked upon the law as their "schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ." A most important part of Christian evidence rested upon it; and in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament they could trace a connected series of glorious designs, foreshadowed by the Almighty, the full realization of which they themselves appreciated and enjoyed. The Jew, then, could not cling more zealously, than would the Christian, to the Old Testament: and, as if no link should be wanting in the chain of evidence, the very heresies in the early ages became, under Providence, a secondary means of preserving the canon in its integrity; for when all parties were constrained to appeal to it as establishing their views of doctrine, the rival sects were similarly interested in avowing and protecting its authority.

Neither can we doubt, but that these books were really written by the authors whose names they bear. For, setting aside the absence of any motive to deception, it is a matter of history, that they were handed down from generation to generation: and thus there is as little reason to question the genuineness of these writings, as of the works of Thucydides, Cicero, Josephus, or any author of antiquity.

Nay, less: for it is a matter of history also, that a distinct LECTURE
VIII. class of men was set apart for the express purpose of guarding, transcribing, and teaching them. However much oral tradition might suffer from such a system, the corruption of a written record, in the charge of men where each individual was a check upon his neighbour, would have been next to impossible.

There is, too, sufficient internal evidence in the books themselves to prove their authenticity; for a very slight examination would convince all but the determined unbeliever, that the accounts contained therein are narratives of real transactions, and not forged for the purpose of exalting the reputation and pretensions of the Jewish people, whose own characters are not there very tenderly handled.

If, in these national records, the Jews were spoken of as God's people, elected from all the nations of the earth, favoured, protected, and delivered, by manifest interpositions of Divine Providence, they were reproached also as an ungrateful, stubborn, and rebellious nation. If there they could point to the page which told them of their country's glory, her triumphs, her ascendancy, and the mightiness of her dominion, they were constrained to look to the tale of shame as well, to mourn over the remembrance of their punishments, their defeats, their idolatries, their captivity. It was no national pride then, no love of fame, which could have induced the Jew to forge these works; and no conceivable motive could have made him cling to them with such tenacity, except the conviction, that the "holy men of God," who put them forth, "spake as they were moved of the Holy Ghost."

See Horne's
Introd.
vol. i. c. 6.
p. 508, 5th
ed.

With regard to the books of the New Testament, a conclusive proof of their genuineness is to be derived from the avowal of the enemies of Christianity, and of their authenticity from their silence. "Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, and all the other early adversaries of Christianity, admitted that the books of the New Testament were all written by the persons whose names they bear; and that circumstance is, itself, a sufficient proof of the genuineness of these books." And as to the facts related in them, "if there had been any falsehoods in the account of such transactions as were generally known, they would have been easily detected; for

Tomline's
Theol.
vol. i. p. 275.

LECTURE VIII. these accounts were published among the people who witnessed the events related by the historians, and who could easily have detected fraud or falsehood, if any such there had been; but who did not attempt to question either the reality of the facts, or the fidelity of the narrators."

Horne,
ut sup.
p. 510.

But we have accomplished little towards advancing the *authority* of the writers of the Old and New Testaments, if we stop short at establishing their integrity and their knowledge. Something more than this is required, when we would urge, not the expediency, but the necessity of our adhering to the doctrines and precepts laid down by them, as an infallible rule of faith and duty. "Something further is requisite, besides a pious life, and a mind purified from passion and prejudice, in order to qualify them to be teachers of a revelation from God, namely, a *divine inspiration*, or the imparting such a degree of divine assistance, influence, or guidance, as should enable the authors of the Scriptures to communicate religious knowledge to others, without error or mistake, whether the subjects of such communications were things then immediately revealed to those who declared them, or things with which they were before acquainted."

Horne's
Introd.
vol. i. ch. iv.
§ 1. p. 231.

It should always be carefully kept in view, that, when we speak of the necessity of inspiration to establish the authority of the Bible as a message sent from God, it is not indispensable to suppose, that every single fact therein recorded, or every single expression used, proceeds from the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The writers were men of strong natural sense, and, in some cases (in those of Moses and St. Paul, for example), of great acquired learning. Much that they relate passed under their own observation: it was not therefore needed, that the Holy Ghost should inspire them to write that of which they were the eye-witnesses; but, as the facts laid down by them most clearly shew God's superintending power to have been peculiarly with His people, we may fairly conclude, that, in the narration of those facts, He would not suffer them to err. Where then their own knowledge and observation enabled them to speak, even as they saw and knew, we may look upon inspiration there, as an over-looking, rather than as a teaching power. But there were facts, which no human

wisdom could have enabled them to discover. The utmost LECTURE
VIII. craft of man could never have penetrated the veil of long past ages, nor have unfolded to us, with such accurate minuteness of detail, the account of the formation of the world, the creation of man, his temptation, his fall, the origin of sin, and the whole antediluvian history; nay, the entire records of the world (as far as they are connected with the main dealings of God with His creatures) to the period of Moses' first connexion with the Jews. It is here we see the finger of God, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Doubtless, he, who "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," Acts vii. 22. must have heard many a traditionary and perverted legend of those facts, the true account of which he afterwards committed to writing. It would be next to impossible, but that some faint traces of many events connected with the early history of the world must have found their way to a country, which was the nursing mother of knowledge as well as of superstition. But it did not belong to human wisdom, it was the province of inspiration, to unravel the tangled skein of garbled and confused accounts, to teach much that had faded away even from the memory of the world, and to bring the scattered relics of its traditions into one consistent and connected whole. With regard to history past, inspiration seems to be a power, either teaching that which was positively unknown, or correcting that which was known but imperfectly: with regard to history present, it appears to have confined the writers to matters of fact, to have enabled them to narrate events, and to lay down examples, from which subsequent ages might make the necessary deductions. In all cases, we may suppose a miraculous extension of their natural powers of discernment, just as Bezaleel, "the cunning workman," who was God's chosen instrument to execute His designs for the decoration of the tabernacle, was "filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship." See Van Mildert's Boyle Lectures, Sermon. xxiii.

Exod.
xxx. 3.

But there is one part of Holy Writ, in which the mind and the wisdom are alike exclusively of God,—prophecy. It were needless to dwell upon the obvious truth, that the highest efforts of human intellect could never have so pene-

LECTURE
VIII.

trated the veil that shrouded the history of future ages, as to have made declarations centuries in advance of the historical facts to which they related. And yet we know that there are many prophecies of the Old Testament of such an explicitly minute character, and, withal, of such an apparently improbable tenor, that their very singularity directed the attention of many generations to the hour marked out for their fulfilment. That hour came; they were accomplished to the letter; and the mystery of prophecy was well-nigh lost in the unveiled truth of history. It is here that all human wisdom is set aside, and God's overruling power steps in to compel His ministers to declare His future will; to warn, at one time conditionally, at another positively; encouraging, threatening, rebuking, and comforting, by turns. And much of these awful declarations of God remains yet to be accomplished: unsearchable mysteries, when unfulfilled; but, when once brought to pass, so plain, and so minute, that "he may run that readeth them."

Hab. ii. 2.

No proof of inspiration can be stronger than that which we derive from prophecy. We find a succession of men delivering certain messages, which they profess to have received from God, and which they declare are so many revelations of events that are to take place hereafter: some, connected with the general history of the world; some, with the fortunes of particular cities or nations; others relating to individuals alone. At one time, these messages are as explicit as though they were relating facts of yesterday; at another, they are couched in language so mysterious, as to lead us to imagine that the very proclaimers of them were not fully conscious of their meaning. The books, containing these prophecies, are placed in safe custody, as they are successively delivered: they are watched and studied; nay, some of them are as well known to the Jewish people whom they concern, as any portion of their by-past history. Some of them, again, are from time to time fulfilled; and that with such exactness, as to make them look with confidence to the accomplishment of the remainder.

But it may not be amiss to select a few predictions out of many which have been fulfilled, and which, at the time of their delivery, must have appeared to them of that day more

like the wild dreams of an enthusiast, than the solemn revelations of the Godhead. In the last charge that Moses gave to his countrymen, he described, most accurately, the miseries that should come upon them, if they forgot the Lord their God, and forsook His covenant. He told them of their degradation, of their slavery, of the besieging of their city; and dwelt minutely upon the peculiar horrors that should accompany the siege. He warned them of their dispersion into all lands, of their uncertain and despised position. These announcements were made centuries before they came to pass, and some of them are even now in the visible course of their accomplishment, exhibiting the Jews as a living monument of the truth both of miracle and prophecy. Again, in the time of Nahum and Zephaniah, Nineveh was one of the mightiest cities of the earth; a city sixty miles in compass, a city which had walls one hundred feet high, and so thick, that three chariots could go abreast upon them. The prophets foretold the approaching judgments upon this city, that said in her heart, "I am, and there is none beside me." The very mode of her capture was pointed out, and her future utter desolation foretold. It all came to pass to the very letter: and so fully has the sentence of desolation been carried into effect, that even its site has been a question amongst the learned.

Deut. xxviii.

Diod. Sic.
l. ii.
Zeph. ii. 15.Nahum
i. 8—10.
ii. 3—6.
Diod. ut sup.
See Newton
on the
Prop.
Diss. ix.

Babylon, too, was in the height of her power, even one of the wonders of the world, when Isaiah and Jeremiah foretold her utter destruction; the former mentioning even the *name* of her conqueror Cyrus, nearly two centuries before his birth. The time, the mode, and circumstances of her reduction, were pointed out; and the event, as recorded even by heathen historians, tallies exactly with the prophecies respecting it. Were any additional testimony required, we might find it in the accounts of every modern traveller who has visited the spot, that the mighty of the earth have indeed fallen.

Isa. xxi. 9.
Jer. li. 8.
Isa. xlv. 28.
xlvi. 1.
Jer. xxv.
11, 12.
Isa. xlii.
4. 17. 20.
Jer. li. 29.
36. 1. 38.
Herod.
i. 191.
Xen. Cyrop.
l. vii.
Aristot. Pol.
l. iii. c. 3.
Newton,
Diss. x.
See Sir R.
K. Porter's
Travels,
vol. ii. p. 308.
Ezek. xxvi.
14—19.
Newton,
Diss. xi.

So too with regard to Tyre; she was the queen of the ocean, when it was prophesied, that she should become "a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited," that she should be made "like the top of a rock," "a place to spread nets upon." It has come to pass: huge fragments of columns, and masses of ruined architecture, lying neglected on the

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VIII.

W. Rae Wil-
son's Trav.
vol. ii. p. 66.
Bucking-
ham's
Travels,
p. 42.
4to ed.

beach, or half buried in the earth, attest the truth of her former magnificence; whilst her little port, almost choked up with sand, and admitting with difficulty the boats of the few fishermen who spread their nets to dry upon the adjacent rocks, affords an awful testimony to the sure accomplishment of prophecy.

Nor is the evidence of prophecy a less striking proof of the inspiration of those who delivered it, when it speaks of the national characteristics and fortunes of some remarkable people, which are as strongly developed at the present hour as ever they were of old. This observation will apply forcibly to the Jews, the Arabians, and the Egyptians. Of the former, Balaam prophesied that they should "dwell alone, and not be reckoned amongst the nations." Nearly thirty-three centuries have passed since this declaration was delivered, and to this hour, every effort of the tyrant or the politician has failed to blend them into the mass of nations: the decree has gone forth; "they dwell alone," and the Jew, in every age, has retained this peculiarity of his country.

Num.
xxiii. 9.

"Ishmael," said the angel of the Lord, "will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." And are not these the habits of the descendants of Ishmael, at the present day? Fierce, unsettled, untameable, the foe of all, and all the foes of him, homeless, houseless, fearless, the Arab of to-day is still the "wild man" of ancient prophecy.

Gen. xvi. 12.

It was said also of Ham, that he should be "a servant of servants unto his brethren:" and again, Ezekiel testified of Egypt, "It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations; for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations." These prophecies have been history, almost from the time of their delivery: never has Egypt permanently kept her place amongst the nations of the earth; never have the descendants of Ham succeeded, for any length of time, in establishing their dominion. Thus had a Jew been asked, which of the two would ultimately prove the victor, in that fierce struggle that took place between the Roman and the Carthaginian, he would have answered, in the words of the

Gen. ix. 25.

Ezek. xxix.
15.

prophecy quoted above, it is written, "Cursed is Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." And if we now should seek the issue of the contests in which Egypt has borne so large a part, though the worldly-wise politician may look doubtfully upon the probabilities or possibilities of human intrigue and arms, the Christian will point confidently to the page wherein it is recorded, that "it shall not exalt itself any more above the nations."

These are abiding proofs of a prescience more than human, in thus anticipating the march of time; and since it is a well-proven fact, that the jealous care with which these prophecies were guarded precludes all possibility of collusion or corruption, it must be an uncandid mind, and a shallow judgment, that would refuse to say, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

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VIII.
Ps. cxviii.
23.

It now remains to notice the inspiration of the New Testament. As such constant reference is made in it to the writings of the Old Testament, the same line of argument would be sufficient to prove that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." But there are peculiar features belonging to the inspiration of the New Testament, which must not be passed over.

2 Timi. ii. 16.

In these books, the genuineness and authenticity of which are so well established, there are certain promises given by our blessed Saviour, the fulfilment of which completely proves their inspiration. Had the poor ignorant fishermen of Galilee, who so often felt and deplored their own inability to understand their beloved Master's words, been told, during His lifetime, that it would be their province to put forth the records of His ministry to the world, to prove from the Old Testament the identity of Jesus of Nazareth with "the Hope of Israel:" had they been told, that they should hereafter be called upon to clear up error, to refute heresy, to establish doctrine, to overthrow idolatry, they would doubtless have shrunk from the task, in the utter hopelessness of being able to accomplish it. "Who is sufficient for these things?" must have been a question often put to the heart, if not uttered by the lips. Now, with reference both to the necessity of their thus bearing testimony in behalf of the truth, and to their own utter inability of themselves to bear it, our Saviour gave them promises and assurances, not, perhaps, thoroughly

Luke xxiv.
21.
Acts i. 6.

2 Cor. ii. 16.

LECTURE VIII. understood by them at the time of their delivery, but enough
 2 Cor. iii. 5. to teach them that their "sufficiency was of God;" and that
 Phil. iv. 13. they both could, and should, hereafter, "do all things through
 Christ that strengthened" them. "Ye shall be witnesses
 unto Me," said the Saviour, "both in Jerusalem, and in all
 Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the
 earth." Such was their commission. How were *they* to
 execute it? they, to whom many of our Lord's sayings had
 been as mysteries? they, who fled from the scene of betrayal
 and suffering? they, who, after the death of Him whom they
 had regarded as the Redeemer of their nation, met, trembling
 and in secret, with doors fast shut for fear of becoming par-
 takers in their Master's sufferings; how were they, the timid,
 to bear testimony to Jesus in the very face of them who
 crucified Him as a blasphemer? How were they, the un-
 lettered, to carry their Master's message to distant lands,
 when they were ignorant both of their language and of their
 faith? How were they to succeed, when their Divine Master
 had failed? It was by relying on the promise of inspiration
 that He had given them. "The Comforter, which is the
 Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He
 shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your
 remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." And when
 they should be brought before councils, synagogues, rulers,
 and kings, for Christ's sake, they were encouraged to rely
 exclusively on the inspiration of the moment; "Take no
 thought, beforehand, what ye shall speak, neither do ye pre-
 meditate: but, whatsoever shall be given you in that hour,
 that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy
 Ghost." Such was the Saviour's promise; and though, when
 given, they could not realize the full comfort derivable from
 it, yet, from the moment when Christ "opened their under-
 standing that they might understand the Scriptures," the
 mercy and the majesty of God's designs seem to have burst
 upon them: then came back upon their memory the promise,
 of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to enable them to do all
 their Master's bidding, and they confidently and prayerfully
 awaited its fulfilment. It came, and henceforward the inspi-
 ration of the Apostles, in their ministerial labours, is a matter
 of history rather than of question.

Acts i. 8.

Mark ix. 32.

Luke ii. 50.

xviii. 34.

John xii. 16.

John xx. 19.

John xiv. 26.

Mark

xiii. 11.

Luke xii. 12.

John xvi. 12.

Luke

xxiv. 45.

Origen cont.

Cels. viii. 47.

Milman's

Bampt.

Lect. p. 280.

Horsley's

Serm. xxxiv.

jux. fin.

If, then, the Apostles were thus visibly supported by the Holy Ghost, when they preached the Gospel from city to city, from nation to nation; is it credible that the Spirit abandoned them when they sat down either to record their labours, or to commit to writing the substance of their holy lessons? Was the Holy Ghost so constant in his guardianship of the Apostles when they toiled for the welfare of the believers of that day; and did He desert them only, when they strove for the spiritual edification of all succeeding ages? In this case, our Saviour's promise would scarcely have been realized to them; and the Comforter would *not* have abided with them "*for ever*."

LECTURE
VIII.
See War-
burton's
Doctrine
of Grace,
b. i. c. 5.

John xiv. 16.

But, it may be urged, that, however willing we may be to admit the inspiration of those writers of the New Testament, who were of our Saviour's chosen twelve, and to whom this promise of assistance was personally given; the same line of argument will not affect St. Paul, St. Mark, and St. Luke, who were not of that privileged number. Let us briefly examine the soundness of this objection.

St. Paul, we read, was converted by a special miracle from heaven, of which, as there were many eye-witnesses, there can be no reasonable doubt. After his conversion, as he tells us in his Epistle to the Galatians, he "conferred not with flesh and blood;" he did not even consult "them which were Apostles before him;" but he went, for three years, into Arabia, and there received his lessons in Divine wisdom, not of man's teaching, but "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." No claim can be more direct than that which he thus makes to inspiration; and, in one part of his instructions to the Corinthians, he draws very clearly the line between command and advice; between what the Lord bade him speak, and what his own judgment deemed expedient: urging, in conclusion, the value of that judgment by the remarkable declaration, "And I think also that I have the Spirit of God;" a declaration which was amply borne out by the many miracles and wonders, that accompanied him in his ministerial office. Again, the whole history of St. Paul and of the other Apostles proves to us that they not only had the power of performing miracles themselves, but of imparting spiritual gifts to others. It is incredible that they should have con-

Gal. i.
16—18.

Ib. 12.
cf. 1 Cor.
xi. 23.

1 Cor. vii.
6—40.

LECTURE VIII. ferred these gifts upon nameless converts, such as those of Ephesus, upon whom the Holy Ghost came by the hands of

Acts xix. 6. St. Paul, so that "they spake with tongues and prophesied," and yet have kept them back from their fellow-labourers in the Lord's vineyard, St. Mark and St. Luke. St. Peter was, as we have seen, the instructor of the former; the latter
Lect. vii. was the friend and companion of St. Paul. We may safely conclude, then, that they would not have suffered these Gospels to have been put forth, unless they had been themselves satisfied of their plenary inspiration.

With regard to the measure of inspiration vouchsafed, the same rule would be equally applicable to the Old and New Testaments; namely, that it prevented the writers from falling into error, whether of fact or doctrine, and gave that supernatural enlargement to the memory and to the intellect, which alone could qualify them to treat of the deep mysteries of God; leaving them, at the same time, to the free exercise of their own train of thought, and their own peculiarity of expression¹.

¹ On the subject of inspiration, see Van Mildert's Boyle Lectures, Sermon xxiii.; Warburton's Doctrine of Grace; Hey's Divinity Lectures, b. i. c. xii. § 3, and ch. xvi. § 9; Horbery's Sermons, vii. viii. ix. and x.

LECTURE IX.

1 JOHN v. 3.

“This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.”

OUR Catechism implies the same counsel with that of the text, when it places before us the third part of our baptismal vow, in which we declare our obligation to “keep God’s holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of our life.” LECTURE
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Now the aim of the infidel who denies revelation, of the freethinker who speculates upon it, and of the man of the world who accepts as much of it as is compatible with his habits and opinions, is substantially the same. It is to represent Christianity, as laid down in the Bible, with all its privileges, duties, and responsibilities, in the light of a gloomy and morose religion. Their view of God is as of one who has commanded them, on peril of their salvation, to abandon most of the pleasures which endear, and to practise most of the austerities that embitter life. They persist in looking upon Him as a hard task-master, who has enjoined them duties difficult to adhere to, and given them passions as hard to quell. Nay, they will make Him the author of evil, by flinging upon Him the origin of our evidently corrupt nature; by regarding Him as ordainer of that sinful bias which they have the skill to see, but not the grace to deplore. So they will argue upon a conception of the Deity founded upon their own theories, and not upon that revelation which they either despise or neglect. They will dwell upon the Almighty’s punishments, without looking to His mercy and forbearance. They will cavil at His prohibitions, without pausing to reflect whether they are or are not connected with our individual comfort, and with the general welfare of society. And then they will ask, “Is this a God not extreme to mark what is

LECTURE done amiss? Is this a religion whose ways are pleasantness,
 IX. and *all* whose paths are peace?"

To say nothing of the fact, that this advocacy of the liberty of human passion reduces man to the level of the animal, by centring all his happiness in the free indulgence of those qualities which we have in common with the brute,—to pass by the contracted views of the nature and attributes of the Godhead that these assertions argue,—we might urge, that they evince but a scanty knowledge of the ordinary principles of human nature. A few words will suffice to shew the wisdom and the mercy of God, in declaring His will to be, that we should keep His commandments, and that "His

1 John v. 3. commandments are not grievous."

Let us then briefly see what the law of God enjoins, and what it forbids: reserving the closer examination of these points until we proceed to discuss the ten commandments.

It enjoins love towards our Maker for His own sake, and love towards man for His Maker's sake: the one principle rendering us at peace with God, by engendering that child-like spirit of perfect confidence, which induces us to cast *all* our care upon Him, through the revealed certainty that

1 Pet. v. 7. "He careth for us;" whilst the other makes us dwell together in unity with our fellow-creatures, by teaching us to love as we have been loved, to forgive as we hope to be forgiven, to forbear as we have been shown forbearance; by laying down,

John xv. 12. in short, the degree of God's love towards ourselves, as that which we must practically exhibit to our brethren. The union of these two principles is calculated to produce those fruits of the Spirit which St. Paul so eloquently describes as characteristic of the true child of God, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." If these dispositions, then, towards God, and these habits of mind towards men, *are* such as to conduce to the happiness of mankind (and he must be a hardy disputant to gainsay it), say we not well, in declaring, that God's commands, which enjoin thus much on the Christian disciple, are as closely connected with our own interests as with His honour? that they bear as much upon our present worldly happiness as upon our future spiritual enjoyment?

Gal. v.
22, 23.

And what do the commands of God forbid? not alone all

sins of rebellion against Himself; but those, also, which mar the usefulness of our intercourse with our fellow men; those which tend to destroy our own peace of mind, our character, our health, our comfort, and our fortunes. They wage unceasing warfare with the indulgence of passions, that degrade ourselves, and injure others: they cut down to the quick the lusts which deaden the mind, whilst they destroy the body: they will not admit of any practice which brings infamy, remorse, or conscious degradation in its train: they forbid every thing which can tend to disqualify our bodies from becoming meet tabernacles for God's indwelling Spirit. Thus, then, those commands, which the worldly despiser of Christianity is disposed to consider as fetters upon free will, and trammels upon the natural impulses of the heart, are the only means by which that will can be rightly guided, or which can prevent those impulses from running riot, to the heart's present misery, and to the soul's eternal wreck.

But God's will is pressed home upon us as closely as His commands. And here, the Scriptures meet us with clear revelations, first, of what that will is; secondly, of the effects of fulfilling it; and thirdly, of the means whereby we may abide in it.

"This is the *will* of God, even your sanctification," says 1 Thess. iv. 3. St. Paul; implying, by these words, that, since God's *desire* is for our holiness, and since no exclusion is even hinted at, it is the perverse will of man alone, opposing itself to the designs of God, that prevents any from being holy. Again, God is described as "not willing" (not exercising His will, μὴ βούλομενος. that is), "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And further, our Saviour says, "This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one, which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." These passages sufficiently indicate the will of God, as far as His dealings towards ourselves are concerned; namely, our personal holiness here, our salvation hereafter. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

Nor are we left to form any vague conjecture as to the effects upon the spiritual hopes of man, resulting from a performance of this will. "Whosoever shall do the will of God," said the Saviour, "the same is my brother, and my sister," John vi. 40. Mark iii. 35.

LECTURE and mother." So, too, St. John tells us, that "the world
IX. passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the

1 John ii. 17. will of God abideth for ever." Thus we see, that the effect of doing God's will is a closer and dearer relationship with Him; effectual spiritual support, increasing and enduring grace. It is thus that Isaiah's words, descriptive of the peculiar privileges of the godly, are literally fulfilled, "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever."

Is. xxxii. 17.

Important as are these blessings, and rich in holy promise as are these declarations of Scripture, how are we to assure ourselves of our ability to perform God's will? It is an interesting question; because, upon our conformity to that will, the blessing and the promise evidently depend. Now, remembering not only the natural alienation of our own will from that of God, but our actual preference of our own perverse ways to those in which He has counselled us to walk, it is clear that, in order to enable us to conform to and love His will, we must have some new power given to us, which we cannot have by nature. Will God, then,

Matt. vii. 7.
John xiv. 13.
xv. 16.

give us this power? "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," is the answer of Scripture: one which gives us exactly what we need; not merely an ill-defined hope, but a positive promise of spiritual support, a promise too which may be in the course of gradual fulfilment, whilst we ourselves are unconscious of heavenly guidance. "This," says St. John, "is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." God has only kept back a knowledge of the *time* when His promises will be fulfilled.

1 John v.
14, 15.

Since, then, our Almighty parent has not only vouchsafed to put forth His will and commandments, but even to shew, to the humblest apprehension, how impossible it is to separate our real interests from their performance, promising the while all needful assistance to us in fulfilling our baptismal pledges in this respect, well does our Catechism ask the Christian disciple, "Dost thou not think that thou art bound

to believe and to do, as" thy godfathers and godmothers LECTURE
IX.
 "have promised for thee?" The answer is, "Yes, verily, }
 and, by God's help, so I will."

But there are some who will disavow the obligations imposed upon them by Baptism, upon the plea, that, personally, they have vowed no vow unto the Lord. "It is perfectly true," they will say, "that in our infancy, when we were involuntary agents, we were baptized; but it was with no consent of our own. We had nothing to do with the pledges made in our name, and in our behalf; we may use, therefore, our discretion in adhering to them. It is very true, that our sponsors promised certain things in our names: but we were no parties to the transaction; they could not answer for our prospective actions or belief; we do not consider ourselves bound by their opinions; nor compelled, either in a moral or religious point of view, to abide by a decision to which we never gave our sanction: *they* may teach what *they* please, *we* may believe and do what *we* please." But it is a miserable subterfuge, that would strive to evade the strictness of baptismal obligations, by refusing to acknowledge the authority of the act. They, who hold these views, should not forget, that, in religious matters, there is no doing things by halves: the Christian faith admits of no compromise between God and Mammon: it no where allows us to select our points of belief or of practice; no where gives us the liberty of exercising our judgment upon matters already decided for us, in common with the whole community of Christians. We must believe all, or reject all; obey in full, or discard in full. The cavillers at baptismal obligations must remember, that, if they are determined to get rid of the responsibility imposed upon them by the sacrament, they must also, to be consistent, give up all claim to the peculiar blessings arising from the same source. If the heart rebels against the duty, the conscience must resign the privilege. They must forego their right to the titles of "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven;" and so, self-robbed of their high spiritual capabilities, they must, by their own deliberate choice, remain under the ban of that awful declaration of Him whose service they have virtually abjured: "He that

LECTURE is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with
 IX. Me scattereth."

Luke xi. 23.

But the Catechism does not stop short at merely admitting our obligation to adhere to our baptismal covenant. It goes a step beyond; and in the latter part of this admission, in the words, "And, *by God's help*, so I will," it lays down the necessary, though humiliating truth, of our own utter inability to fulfil the conditions of this covenant, without God's preventing and assisting grace. The rule that Christ gave to His Apostles is of universal application, "Without

John xv. 5.

Me ye can do nothing;" and the most superficial examination of the moral principles of the Gentile world, before the coming of Christ, would sufficiently prove to us, without any other aid, that independence in religious matters is utterly unfitted to our fallen nature. The experience of history alone (the "philosophy which teaches by example") would convince the candid enquirer, that, of ourselves, "the way of peace we know not; there is no judgment in our goings; we have," when left alone, "made us crooked paths." But revelation makes that a divine certainty, which reason would put forward as a human conclusion. It tells us, that, in every stage of our Christian progress, the grace of God is needed to direct our steps. We can neither begin, nor carry on, nor end a truly heavenward course, without it. "The

Isa. lix. 8.
 See Van
 Mildert's
 Boyle
 Lectures,
 vol. ii. p.
 41—43.

Prov. xvi. 1.

preparations of the heart are from the Lord;" the Lord thus claiming, as His own work, the very first impulses of a godly desire towards Him. It is He "which worketh in us both

Phil. ii. 13.

to will and to do of His good pleasure;" thus forbidding man to pride himself upon his growth in holiness, and compelling even the most advanced Christian to confess, "By the grace

1 Cor. xv. 10.

of God I am what I am:" "so, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that sheweth

Rom. ix. 16.

mercy." It is "by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us," that we are enabled to "hold fast the form of sound words

2 Tim. i.
 13, 14.

which we have heard," and to "keep that good thing which was committed to us:" it is through His power, that we "abound in hope," and are "filled with all joy and peace in

Rom. xv.
 13.
 Eph. iii.
 16, 17.

believing." It is by Him, that we are "strengthened with might in the inner man," and "rooted and grounded in love."

After the Catechumen has acknowledged his obligation, to

believe and to do as his sponsors promised for him; confessing, at the same time, his own insufficiency, and pleading God's sufficiency to enable him to walk "worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called," he is next taught to "thank his heavenly Father, that He has called Him to this *state of salvation* through Jesus Christ, our Saviour." LECTURE IX. Eph. iv. 1.

If we ask, What are the blessings that our Church considers to be implied by this expression, a "state of salvation?" we shall find an answer in a part of her baptismal service. In that we thank God, in the following words, for the benefits that He *has* bestowed upon the infant thus brought into covenant with Him: "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it *hath* pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for Thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into Thy Holy Church." This then is our Church's summary of the blessings conveyed by Christian Baptism; spiritual regeneration, adoption into the family of God, incorporation into His Church. Well, then, may we consider the possession of these privileges, not as affording merely a *capability* of salvation, but as placing us actually in a *state* of salvation; a

See Acts ii.
38, 39.
Titus iii. 5.
John i. 12.
1 Cor. xii.
12—14.

state in which we not only enjoy all the necessary means to contribute to so great an end, but are delivered "from the present slavery of sin, and the future punishment of it; a state of the truest happiness that this life can afford, introducing to perfect and everlasting happiness in the next."

See Lect. i.

New indeed is our condition: the penalty attached to our original sin has been paid by Christ, and it is remitted individually to us, upon our being brought into covenant with God by the peculiar means instituted by Christ Himself. We are invested with new titles; we are ushered into new prospects; we are supplied with new capacities; and all things needful for the Christian's future well-being are placed within his reach. Such is the state of salvation of which our Catechism speaks; adding, that we are brought into it "through Jesus Christ our Saviour," that the work may be entirely of grace, the blessings derived solely through our Redeemer's merits, and not given to us, because we have deserved thus or thus.

Seeker's
Lectures in
loc.

Two truths must go hand in hand with this view of the state of salvation, into which the baptized Christian is brought.

LECTURE ^{IX.} First,—though, by this sacrament, he is received into the covenant of grace, it does not follow, as a matter of course, still less of necessity, that he should avail himself of all the blessings then bestowed upon him. God has given him a talent. By a right understanding of its value, and by a proper use of it, he may with that gain five talents: but, on the other hand, he may so disregard it, as to bury it in a napkin; or so misuse it, as to make it minister to his perdition, by provoking the Holy Spirit to desert, in after years, that temple of His body which He had consecrated in infancy. Secondly,—regeneration, though it removes from the soul the curse of original sin, does not thoroughly eradicate sin itself. The seed of iniquity remains: constant is our danger from the attempts of the expelled demons to re-enter the garnished dwelling; and therefore constant must be our efforts to keep up such a communication with God, as may effectually preserve us throughout our spiritual perils. When then the Church bids her children thank God for having brought them into this state of salvation, rightly does she teach them to pray unto Him to give them His grace, that they may continue in the same unto their lives' end: rightly in her devotional formularies does she again and again impress upon them, that it is to God, and not to their own strength, that they are to look for such continuance, remembering the caution of St. Paul, “By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” “Though she evidently wishes, as far as possible, to consider her children in the state of grace, she repeatedly reminds them that they may, too probably, have ‘departed from grace given,’ and, consequently, be in a state of deadly sin.” And awful indeed is the language of Scripture, when it speaks of the difficulty of regaining our lost privileges in such a case. “If,” says St. Peter, “after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning: for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” To the same effect is the warning of St. Paul. “It is impossible for those who were once enlight-

See Lect. ii.

Article ix.

Eph. ii.
8, 9.Knox's
Remains,
vol. i. p. 468.2 Pet. ii.
20, 21.

ened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." These passages can scarcely be misunderstood. The Apostles speak in them of a high state of spiritual privilege, of grace imparted, of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, of a knowledge of Christ as a Saviour, of an understanding of the word of God; and yet they tell us of the possibility of losing all these gifts, and of so falling away from grace given, as to render it a very difficult matter for them to be renewed unto repentance,—so difficult as to be compassed only by Him to whom all things are possible.

Guarded, then, as the baptized Christian may be, by the Spirit of the Most High; counselled, as he is, to "go on unto perfection;" reminded, as he is, of his high privilege of relationship to the Godhead; comforted, as he is, in being able, by a long course of practical godliness, to realize that glorious declaration of St. John, "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he *cannot* sin, *because* he is born of God;" nevertheless, he must still bear in mind, that his "adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour;" he must remember, that he is therefore "to watch and pray, lest he enter into temptation;" to take heed, lest, while he "thinketh he standeth," the hour of his fall may be upon him. Though constant communion with God may have rendered sin so distasteful and uncongenial to the soul, as to prevent its effects from being visible in the life and conversation, "this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated." Whilst, then, our thanksgivings for grace already given arise to the mercy-seat of God, the prayer for added grace and for continued protection must arise as well; so that, at the close of this our mortal pilgrimage, we may have to say with David, "I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God: for all His judgments were before me, and I did not put away His statutes from me: I was also upright before Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity."

LECTURE
IX.Heb. vi.
4—6.

Heb. vi. 1.

1 John iii. 9.
See Slade's
Annot. in
loc.
1 Pet. v. 8.Matt. xxvi.
41.

1 Cor. x. 12.

Article ix.

Ps. xviii.
21—23.



Part II.

The Christian's Creed.

Catechist. Rehearse the Articles of thy Belief.

Answer. I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth :

And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried : He descended into hell ; The third day He rose again from the dead ; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty ; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost ; the Holy Catholic Church ; The Communion of Saints ; The Forgiveness of Sins ; The Resurrection of the Body ; And the Life everlasting. Amen.

Q. What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief ?

A. First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world.

Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind.

Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God.

LECTURE X.

HEB. xi. 6.

“Without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

LECTURE X. BEFORE entering upon the detailed examination of the Apostles' Creed, which is put forth in the Catechism as the profession of a Christian's faith, it may not be irrelevant to dwell upon the nature of religious faith itself: for upon that must be founded the reception of the Scriptures as the word of God; from that must spring a cordial acceptance of the Catholic truths which the Church has derived from that precious storehouse of divine knowledge, and has embodied in her creeds and formularies.

Heb. xi. 1. St. Paul tells us, first, that “Faith is the substance of things hoped for.” It gives us, that is, so perfect a confidence in God's word, as to bring substantially before us our dearest hopes, connected with this world and the next. We hope, for example, here, for the sanctification of our souls; we look hereafter for their acceptance and eternal bliss. God's promises give the assurance of both to the *true* believer; and it is the province of faith to cling fast to this assurance, and to bring these promises so home to us, as to enable us to appropriate them, with the same devout reliance on God's word, as though they were actually fulfilled.

And it is “the evidence of things not seen.” It stands in the stead of sight, with reference to the personal realization of all that God has revealed to us of His attributes, and of our own prospects; and the effect on our minds should be the same, as if we had seen with our own eyes the things that we profess to believe as divine truths. And there are many of these things so confessedly beyond our comprehension, that

we are compelled to "walk by faith, not by sight;" to believe simply because God has said, Thus and thus they are: and it is faith alone which enables us to discern them spiritually, as though they were present to the natural eye.

LECTURE
X.
2 Cor. v. 7.
See Van
Mildert's
Serm.
vol. ii.
p. 344.

All knowledge of the Godhead is based upon a simple pious trust in the revelations that He has made of Himself to man; and it is by the exercise of this trust, that the humblest Christian is possessor of a wisdom denied to the keenest intellects of the Gentile world. It is a wisdom "conversant with the world of spirits; and by it man aspires to a knowledge of God and a future state, of the human soul, of good and evil, of every thing which relates to his spiritual and eternal interests." Through the same trust "is conveyed to his mind such an accession of light and information, as makes him a character of a different kind" from the heathen philosopher. "As far as God sees fit to impart knowledge to him, he becomes acquainted with the spiritual and invisible world; he ascertains his rank in the scale of creation; he learns his duty and his destination, and is enabled to form a just comparative estimate of things temporal and eternal."

Van Mil-
dert's Boyle
Lect.
vol. ii. p. 99.

Ib. p. 100.

Nothing can be more explicit than the language of Scripture upon the blessedness and necessity of this spirit of faith, as the groundwork of religious principle. "Blessed are they," said our Saviour to St. Thomas, "that have not seen, and yet have believed." Blessed are they, that is, who can exercise that childlike feeling, which will not demand positive proof as the condition of belief; who will not require every point of doctrine, and each separate revelation, to be reduced to a mathematical certainty, before they can conscientiously (as the phrase is) receive it: but who will understand, that there is, and must be, a wide difference between the capacity of the finite and the intelligence of the Infinite. And further, it is impossible to forget, how many of our blessed Saviour's miracles were suffered to depend upon the faith of those, who entreated His compassion.

John xx. 29.

Mark v. 34.
ix. 23.
John xi. 40.
Matt. ix. 2.
22. 29.
Luke viii. 50.
xviii. 42.

Nor does Scripture limit itself to laying down the fact, "Blessed are they that believe;" it tells us also of the necessity of thus believing. In one place we are warned, that "without faith it is impossible to please God;" in another it is written, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be

Heb. xi. 6.
2 Chron.
xx. 20.

LECTURE established ;" in a third, " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, ^{X.} and thou shalt be saved." The Baptist's testimony of Jesus ^{Acts xvi. 31.} was, " He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the ^{John iii. 36.} wrath of God abideth on him." And, at the close of His earthly career, almost His last words to His disciples were, ^{Mark xvi. 16.} " He that believeth not shall be damned." Faith, then, according to God's own declaration, is a quality without which, they to whom the Gospel is preached, and who have every opportunity both of hearing and believing, cannot be saved. Our eternal salvation depends not upon our morality alone, however spotless it may be in our own estimation and to the eyes of others, but upon the measure of our faith ; we carefully remembering the while, that faith itself is available to this great end, only so far as it purifies the heart. And further, " since the subjects with which faith is conversant are things beyond the reach of human intellect, it is bound to receive the truths communicated through revelation, not as matters of controversy, but as the incontestable dictates of supreme Wisdom."

Van Mil-
dert's Boyle
Lect.
vol. ii.
p. 165.

Since, then, Scripture bears such decided testimony to the blessedness and necessity of faith, what are we to say of those who are manifestly devoid of that kind of faith of which the Apostle speaks, and to which alone, as far as we can see, the blessings of salvation are promised ? The first conclusion, to which we should arrive, would be that of our Saviour, " He that believeth not shall be damned." But it is important to see if there are no exceptions to this rule.

There are some to whom we may safely say it will not apply. The want of faith will surely not be imputed as a sin to those many millions, from whom, according to God's mysterious counsel, the light of the Gospel has been hidden ; those who are still without the vineyard, uncalled, untaught. Of them St. Paul speaks, when he says, " When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts ;" and thus, " If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision ?" It was a merciful commission that the Spirit gave

Rom. ii.
14, 15.

Ib. 26,
& see 27.

unto the Apostle, when he thus bade him put forth the LECTURE
X.
 comforting doctrine, that if they, to whom Jesus had not
 been preached, did, by the light of nature, the precepts of
 the revealed law, their uncircumcision (or want of a cove-
 nanted title to the promise) should be as available to them
 in the sight of God, as the circumcision (or covenant) of the
 Jew.

But it is not the unenlightened Gentile, who is alone devoid of that faith of which the Apostle speaks; for it is too painfully evident that vast numbers of those who profess and call themselves Christians, especially amongst the uneducated classes, have such vague and undefined notions even of the elements of religious truth, that, when questioned respecting their hope of salvation, they would be sorely tasked to give any good reason for that hope. God, they know, made them and all the world; Christ, they are taught, redeemed them and all mankind: but of the necessity, the manner, and the completeness of this redemption, their ideas are commonly of the most confused nature, limited to a general understanding that Christ has done something for them, that they could not do for themselves; but what, they cannot exactly tell. The Holy Ghost, they learn, sanctifieth them, and all the elect people of God: but of the imperative need of this sanctification, of its mode, of its extent, and of the privilege and blessing of election, they entertain, too many of them, the most bewildered conceptions. Nay, it is to be feared, that this ignorance of the real principles of Christianity extends to many, even of cultivated understandings, and with good opportunities of religious instruction; who are equally indifferent about the doctrines which they profess to believe, and whose actions are as little the result of a sound and practical faith. One will go to his farm, another to his merchandise; both lovers of worldly wisdom, but neglecters of divine knowledge. And there are many others, who substitute the external decencies of religion for its influence upon the heart and conduct: who are so content with their own measure of morality, as to be heedless of the quality of their faith; so satisfied with what they *do*, as to care but little what they *believe*. Now, in a general sense of the word, all these classes are believers; that is, they call themselves

LECTURE X. Christians, and would, perhaps, be both astonished and indignant, were you to question their right to the appellation. But we must put a new construction upon the Apostle's language, before we can admit their claim to the possession of "faith," in *his* sense of the word. It is evident, that there is little here of that believing spirit, which will draw from the Scriptures its only rules of duty towards God and man; little of that confiding spirit, which will strive to realize the hopes of the unseen future; little of that appropriating spirit, which will take to itself the promises of God, whilst it does not forget His warnings and His threats; little of that comforting spirit, which in all the trials of life can look stedfastly to Jesus, and hear Him, as it were, say again, "It is I, be not afraid;" and little of that practical spirit, which carries with it into every day life the awful caution of the Gospel, "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." Do such as these, then, (it is a serious question,) come under the condemnation of our Lord and His Apostle?

Compare
Mark xvi.
16, with
Heb. xi. 6.

With regard to the ignorant from the lack of capacity or opportunity of instruction, we may safely say, No. It is here, we may humbly believe, that unto whom little is given, of them shall little be required, provided that they act up conscientiously to that measure of light which they really do possess; nor can we suppose, that God will call them to an account for deficiency in a quality, the nature and necessity of which they are utterly unable to comprehend.

With regard to the ignorant, either from want of will to learn, or from a neglect and misuse of the advantages and means placed within their reach, the question is not so easily answered. If Scripture is able, through faith, to make us wise unto salvation; if the right reception of the doctrinal truths contained in that holy record is the foundation of a practical faith; it cannot be that a baptized Christian may be wilfully ignorant of its principles, wilfully devoid of a thorough belief in its revelations, and yet be without sin remaining to his account. With such a guide before us, with every means of securing its assistance placed within our reach, we shall assuredly be judged, not only with reference to what we *did* know, but to what we *might have known*.

But the indifferent Christian, who, like the heathen ruler,

careth "for none of these things," may, if hard pressed, urge in his defence, that he was not aware of the so great necessity of adding faith to his morality, or rather, of founding his practice upon his belief. He may say, that he was never clearly informed upon this head, and so may plead, that his neglect was the result of ignorance, not of wilfulness. Why should he not then, he may ask, obtain mercy for an unwitting sin, even as did St. Paul? In this country, at least, the plea will not hold good. Why did he not know? For what end has the merciful hand of God placed such abundant means of grace before him? Wherefore has education, founded upon Gospel principles, become so general, that unavoidable ignorance is the exception, where, in times past, it was the rule?

LECTURE
X.Acts
xviii. 17.

1 Tim. i. 13.

Wherefore are God's Sabbaths, but that the professed disciple may regard them as days of high privilege, wherein he may not only rest from his toils for the refreshment of the body, but that, for the soul's comfort, he may hold communion with his God in prayer, wait upon Him in His holy temple, listen reverently to His word, and receive dutifully the counsels of His ministers? Wherefore are the Scriptures given to him, but that he may with prayerful study search them? Wherefore is he invited to the Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ, but that he may become strengthened by God's Spirit in the inner man? And wherefore is the privilege of prayer, but that if any of us "lack wisdom," we may "ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not?" So unsparingly has God supplied our spiritual needs in this country, that, in most cases, if a man is utterly ignorant of the necessity of faith, he must be either so wanting in capacity, as to be well nigh incapable of receiving the elements of Christian knowledge; or else "like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely."

James i. 5.

Ps. lviii. 4, 5.

But there are some who will affect to think it strange that so much stress should be laid, not upon the expediency, but on the necessity of believing all the doctrines of Christianity, when it is notorious, first, that some of those doctrines are mysterious and difficult to understand; secondly, that there

LECTURE ^{X.} are points which have been matters of controversy from the earliest ages of Christianity; points on which neither the learned, who make these things their almost exclusive study, nor the mass, who look at them superficially, are agreed.

It is perfectly true, that there are many things taught in Scripture, as matters of faith, which entirely baffle our reason: the fact is admitted; we cannot understand them: but are we justified in drawing the conclusion, that *therefore* we are at liberty to reject them? The very existence of a revelation from God, not only presupposes that the things thus revealed are undiscoverable by the light of human reason, but, as we might expect, lays down facts of such a stupendous character connected with the Godhead, as entirely to set aside the ordinary rules of human experience and worldly wisdom: but are we, in consequence, to deny the truth of the position, that "whosoever will be saved, before all things

Ath. Creed. it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith?" Nay, it were safer, to say the least, to conclude with one whose writings have effectually disproved the sophistries of the sceptic and the infidel, "if it can be proved that Christianity is the *word of God*, what are all the subtlest arguments in the world, or the boldest opposition to its truths, but disputing and fighting against God?" The same rule holds good in human matters; why should it not be suffered to extend to the things that are of God? As parents, we should think but poorly of a child's docility or affection, if he were to refuse to believe what we told him, upon the plea that he could not understand it; or decline to obey, because he was unable to see the justice or necessity of the command. If we expect implicit faith and unquestioning obedience at the hands of our children, on pain of our parental displeasure, or, it may be, punishment—why is God to be called a hard taskmaster if He looks for a kindred faith and obedience in

1 Cor. iii. 1. His children, in the "babes in Christ?"

But the difficulties connected with faith in God's word are much over-rated. "Things hard to be understood" are to be found, beyond all doubt, in the evangelical writings; it is the admission of one of God's Apostles: and our faith may be tried by their cordial reception. But the single elements of Christianity are no deep hidden mysteries, provided there

be but the desire to know, and the willingness to be taught. LECTURE
 The minds of little children and of the uneducated have X.
 many points in common. Generally speaking, they are both
 conscious of their ignorance; both disposed to look with a
 certain degree of reverence and wonder on those who are
 wiser than themselves; both inclined to respect and listen to
 their teachers; both requiring pains and patience on the part
 of their instructors: the same remarks then will, in a great
 measure, apply to both.

Any one, who has had much experience in watching over and directing the minds of little children, could say that there is no insurmountable difficulty in inculcating in them a practical knowledge of elementary Christian truths, provided that they are put forth, not as matters of controversy, but of fact; provided too, (which is an important point,) that those abstract terms are avoided, which we are in the habit of using, when we speak of this or that particular doctrine. For instance, if you talk to a child about his "original sin," he will not understand you; the *term* conveys no meaning to his mind. But take him when any perverse fit or outbreak of temper has passed away, and reason quietly and affectionately with him, it will not be a very hard task to make him understand and remember, that there are many times in which he feels a natural inclination knowingly to do what is wrong, even though past experience assures him he will be inevitably punished for his fault. You can make him understand, that there are times when he feels an unaccountable desire to disobey his parents, to tell falsehoods, to quarrel with his brothers and sisters, and in many ways to act perversely. Explain to the child that these are the results of a corrupt nature, and only to be effectually overcome by constant prayer and watchfulness:—turn his attention to the Bible; shew him how Adam and Eve lost, by their disobedience, that likeness to God in which they first were made, received this corrupt nature as a consequence of their sin, and entailed it upon all who were born of them, and after them:—take some pains to press this conviction upon him, and you will gradually inculcate a practical knowledge of the *doctrine* of "original sin," without mystifying the child's mind by *terms*. Again, if you talk to him of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus

LECTURE X. Christ, and of the sacrifice offered up by Him, you go beyond his comprehension. But tell him, that God still loved the world, although it was so very wicked; that He loved it too well to make it die entirely for its wickedness; that, though it had so deeply offended Him by many acts of disobedience, He, like a tender father, was desirous to "reconcile the world unto Himself;" but that it was still so very sinful, that God, who had declared that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," could not keep His word, and pardon it all at once, without some sort of satisfaction being made to Him: that, in this difficulty, Jesus Christ, God's only Son, took pity on us, and was willing to satisfy God the Father for us, because we were too wicked to do it for ourselves. Tell him, too, that for this purpose, He, though God and Lord of all, came down from heaven to earth, became one of us,—a man; and, as man, submitted willingly to a very painful death, because God the Father had said, that in that case He would pardon all our sins for His sake, provided that we repented of and forsook them, and believed in that Saviour, who, as we are told in the Bible, "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." Put the facts thus before your pupil, and the very tenderness from which they spring will awaken his interest, whilst their simplicity will command his attention.

Once more, speak to a child of the doctrine of sanctification; it is the term again, not the doctrine that bewilders him. But he will understand you if you tell him, that, when Jesus Christ was preparing to leave the world, to go back to His Father in heaven, He promised His disciples that He would send them a "Comforter," who would teach them, would make them holy, would strengthen them, would be with them for ever: that God Himself is this Comforter, and that He will come to all who feel their need of Him, and pray earnestly for His help. Tell him, besides, that, without this Comforter, he can do nothing; that it is He alone who can give him either the will to obey, or the power to believe: He alone who can so change his heart, as to teach him to love God "because He first loved us." And do not forget to tell him, that, when he was a very little child, he was baptized; and that then God admitted him into His family,

made him one of His own children, gave into his keeping a portion of His Holy Spirit. You can then ask him, since LECTURE
X. God has done so much *for* him, and *in* him, given him so much at present, and promised so much for the future, if he does not think that he ought to shew by his readiness to believe, and willingness to do all that God has taught and told him, that he is most grateful for His fatherly kindness. If "love" be thus made the great theme of religious teaching, and if these lessons are conducted with earnest and affectionate simplicity, (not striving to conceal from your pupil, that there is much in the Bible which neither he nor the wisest man that ever lived can thoroughly understand, but must receive in faith,) there will be no such very great difficulty in teaching a child the first elements of that Catholic faith, without a belief in which no one can plead a covenanted title to salvation. If a child, then, can understand thus much, they, whose intelligence is on a par with that of children, must not urge, in palliation of ignorance of the saving doctrines of Christianity, that they are too hard for them to understand.

Another plea has been urged: namely, that, from the very first promulgation of Christianity, many learned men have looked upon some of the most important doctrines of the Gospel as points of controversy; and that, even now, there is much difference of opinion upon them in the Christian world. Why, then, it is argued, should the unlearned be expected to entertain a faith respecting these things, which those, who ought to understand them better, do not appear to exercise? The fact is true, but not the inference. God is made known to us, not through worldly wisdom, but by His own revelation. "Canst thou by *searching* find out God?" was the pious truth that Zophar spake to Job; and Job xi. 7. experience has proved to us, that there is as much knowledge of the human heart, as of God's mysterious dealings, in the remark. The pride of intellect has, from age to age, stood in the way of the humble childlike spirit of faith; and the words of inspiration are as applicable now as when they were uttered three thousand years ago, "Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." The Ib. 12. The learned Pharisee and the deep-read Scribe could not, with

LECTURE ^{X.} all their knowledge of the prophecies, perceive the identity of Jesus of Nazareth with their promised Messiah: the mighty works which were done before their eyes served only to harden them in unbelief, and to drive them to seek for an explanation in the supposed agency of witchcraft, whilst "the common people heard Him gladly." And Christ magnified the wisdom of that decree, by which the gracious designs of the Almighty were hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto babes: "which left the self-conceited in the ignorance they affected, and instructed the meek and dispassionate, the modest and the lowly, in the mysteries of the Gospel."

Mark xii. 37.

See Matt.
xi. 25.

Stanhope on
St. Mat-
thias's Day.

1 Cor. iii.
18—20.
Job v. 13.
Ps. xciv. 11.

In every age there has been a tendency amongst the learned to be wise above that which is written, forgetting the Apostle's counsel, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise: for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."

1 Cor. i. 23.

Sherlock,
Ser. in loc.

Matt. xv. 9.

How strikingly has this painful truth been developed in the history of the Christian world! It was this same pride of intellect that made the preaching of "Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness:" the one disregarding salvation itself if it were to be wrought by such humble, and, as they thought, unworthy means; the other rejecting a method of redemption, "which was above the reach of their philosophy, and which refused to be tried by the disputes and subtleties of their schools." It was the same spirit that led to the fantastic blasphemies of Gnosticism; the same spirit that has been at the bottom of the *additions* with which the Church of Rome has cumbered the pure faith of the Gospel, which has induced her (like the Pharisees of old, whose example she follows in *adding* to the law,) to "teach for doctrines the commandments of men." It is the same spirit that, in the middle ages, degraded the faith of Christ into a system of superstitious forms and observances; and that, in the last century, broke out in another shape, in rejecting, as the old wives' fables of a self-interested priesthood, all that God has vouchsafed

to reveal to us, in proclaiming war against all systems of religion as fetters upon the free mind of man, and in setting up reason as the only guide, the will the only god. Is it saying too much, to affirm, that it is a part of the same spirit of worldly wisdom that, in these days, prompts many a professing member of Christ in England to brand, as bigots and narrow-minded, those who are desirous to seek for the "*old paths*," in the humble trust that they may find therein "rest for their souls?" And there is surely the same spirit at work, when we see those "who call themselves Christians" refusing to take counsel of Him who was "meek and lowly in heart," imagining that they prove themselves superior to the prejudices of their day, in doubting what their forefathers believed, in despising the ordinances, the discipline, and the primitive customs of the Church.

The doubts and controversies of the learned and worldly-wise should be no stumbling-block to him who is content to "walk by faith, not by sight." "It is written," says St. Paul, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." It was in the spirit of prophecy that the Apostle wrote, knowing that worldly knowledge, untempered by Christian humility, so far from contributing to engender a pious spirit of faith, is, in the general sense, against it. It suggests difficulties and speculations upon the simple records of the Scriptures; it loves to start new theories, to put commonly-received opinions in new lights, without first ascertaining from the only sure authority, whether the old interpretation be not the best. And so the human mind will too often wander on in the pursuit of something new, (like the child delighted for a season with its last new toy, satisfied only whilst it is a novelty,) until, bewildered with the results of its own experiments, it is led to fall back upon itself; and with regard to any startling Scriptural fact, that seems to oppose the received systems of human science, it will ask, "How can these things be?" when the less learned, but more humble Christian, will remember that His Saviour's declaration to His doubting disciples was, "With God all things are possible."

Matt.
xix. 26.

One caution respecting the extent of our belief. It has been already stated, in the words of one of the departed lights

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Van Mildert
cited above,
p. 96.

of our Church, that "since the subjects with which faith is conversant are things beyond the reach of human intellect, it is bound to receive the truths communicated through revelation not as matters of controversy, but as the incontestable dictates of supreme Wisdom." We may add, that this remark will apply both to doctrines and to facts, however irreconcilable they may be to our reason or experience. We must make our choice, to reject all, or to believe all; there is no middle course. The Bible is either a complete forgery, or the very word of God; and there are few practices more savouring of a presumptuous and self-willed temper, few more prejudicial to our growth in grace, than that of questioning the immediate inspiration of this or that particular passage, because it may jar with our opinions, contradict our prejudices, or clash with our systems. We have no right to apply one part of Scripture to our comfort, merely because it happens to be adapted to our present exigency, whilst we refuse to believe another, because we cannot reconcile it to *our* ideas upon the fitness of the divine economy: we must not cling to the promise whilst we forget the threat, nor be alive to the hope but indifferent to the warning. It is not this or that part only of Holy Writ which is inspired, or suited to our moral and spiritual wants. "*All* Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Thus the Christian, who has that childlike faith which comes up to the Apostle's definition, will receive the Bible as a whole; its narratives, both of nations and individuals, its prophecies, its threats, its promises, its counsels, its moral and religious principles.

2Tim. iii. 16.

It is remarkable, that in every walk of life we are constantly exercising this spirit of faith, and applying it to our worldly matters. Society is bound together by mutual faith or trust; it could not exist one instant without it. Throughout our whole existence we trust something; our own experience, each other's word, the ordinary course of things. It is by an act of faith that the husbandman sows his seed, in the expectation that, if the seasons are favourable, his labours will yield him a profitable return. It is by this that the mariner ventures on the, to him, not unknown nor trackless deep: he places faith in his little compass; it has never

hitherto deceived him ; it has always guided him aright before ; LECTURE
he knows that he can trust it, because his experience of its ^{X.}
truth tells him it is unerring. The artizan works in faith ;
the physician essays to heal by it ; the merchant ventures
his all upon it. In some of these instances faith is acted
upon, where the experience is but slender, and the results
confessedly uncertain ; nay, in many departments of arts and
science, effects are produced by faith, arising from an expe-
rience of facts, rather than from a clear knowledge of prin-
ciples or causes. And yet men will too often think, that they
shew their wisdom in doubting God's word in cases where
they cannot *prove* ; whilst, without any positive proof, they
will trust their own experience, the word of others, and even
public rumour. It is God alone whom they cannot trust
entirely ; God, whose truth respecting the future might well
be shewn from the well-proven truth of the past, from pro-
phesy that has become history.

LECTURE XI.

HEB. xi. 1.

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

LECTURE **THE** truth of this apostolical definition of faith, which has
XI. been already considered as a matter of doctrine, will be made
more evident by the examination of some few scriptural
characters, in whom faith was the leading principle of action.
We shall see, besides, that a saving faith is always practical;
always, that is, accompanied by good works as the fruit and
perfection of its existence: and, further, that, sooner or later,
it ensures its own reward.

St. Paul tells us, in that sublime and eloquent discourse
upon faith which he has given us in his Epistle to the
Hebrews, that “by faith, Noah, being warned of God of
things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to
the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the
world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by
faith.”

It was revealed to Noah by God, that His forbearance and
long-suffering had their limits; that He would strive or plead
with man but for one hundred and twenty years longer; and
that, at the expiration of that period, if they did not repent
and turn from their iniquities, He would destroy them with
the earth, for He saw “that the wickedness of man was great
in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his
heart was only evil continually.”

The Almighty foreknew that they would reject the counsel
of His commissioned preacher, that they would misuse the
long respite granted to them, that they would *not* repent. He
commanded Noah to make an ark for himself, for his family,
and for the creatures whom Divine Providence would bring

up to this their place of refuge. Noah, as we may judge from his actions, was not startled at the extraordinary nature of the revelation, did not question the justice of God, did not hesitate to obey God's commands, because the time appointed for the accomplishment of his threats was so distant. He did not urge, how difficult it would be for him to manage so huge a vessel as he was commissioned to prepare¹, he did not stumble at the many human improbabilities connected with the fulfilment of God's declaration. He believed God's word implicitly, although the "things not seen as yet" were such as he could hardly realize, up to the moment of their accomplishment. Moved with that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, he prepared the ark according to God's direction; a vessel of such enormous proportions, as to convince him that all human power would be unavailing to direct or manage it, amidst the unknown perils of the threatened waste of waters. Nor was his faith tried on this point alone. Remembering our Saviour's description of the reckless infidelity of the antediluvians, even up to the very hour of the flood, we can well imagine the ridicule that would on all sides assail the faithful patriarch during the building of the ark; the taunts with which they would reply to him when he urged God's threats, spoke plainly of his warnings, and implored them to flee from the certain coming vengeance. But his simple faith prevailed over every obstacle: by its exercise, not by its existence only, he and his house were saved. It was thus, that "he condemned the world;" convinced them, that is, of sin in their unbelief, and bore testimony to the justice of their punishment: thus, that he "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith," and found that God is indeed "a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

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Luke
xvii. 27.

Heb. xi. 7.

Ib. 6.

St. Paul points to a similar instance of the blessings laid

¹ Dr. Hales, in his *Analysis of Chronology*, proves the ark to have been of the burden of 42,413 tons. "A first rate man-of-war," he says, "is between 2200 and 2300 tons; and consequently the ark had the capacity or stowage of eighteen of such ships, the largest in present use, and might carry 20,000 men, with provisions for six months, besides the weight of 1800 cannons, and of all military stores."

LECTURE ^{XI.} up in store for a practical faith, exercised against all human prospect of a realization of the promises upon which it was founded, and to which it looked.

Abraham was living with his father Terah, in Ur, a city of the Chaldees. God "called him," desired him to abandon his country, his kindred, and his possessions, and to go to a land of which he knew nothing, respecting which nothing was told him, God only promising to conduct him to it at some future time. There was no present hope, no personal advantage held out to him to induce him to comply. No covenant was made, that he himself should be otherwise than a stranger and a sojourner in this new land, for "He gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on:" his very burying-place was a purchase: yet God "promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him," that of his seed he would make a great and mighty nation, and that in him should "all families of the earth be blessed."

Acts vii. 5.
Ib. 16.

Gen. xii.
2, 3.

He was an old and childless man, to whom these declarations were made. His wife, too, was long past that time of life, at which, humanly speaking, there was any possibility of her having a child. Why, then, should he believe it probable that all these promises should be fulfilled? Why, he might naturally have argued, should he abandon scenes that had been endeared to him from infancy, ties that had been entwined around his heart with the fond associations of many a by-gone year? Why was he to become a wanderer for the rest of his days, to exchange his certain present comforts for a promised good, which, after all, his descendants were destined to enjoy, and not himself? But mark the faith of this aged servant of God. He did not stumble at the apparent impossibility, and the evident improbability, of the promise being fulfilled. He knew in whom he had to trust: he knew that, as God had said it, so He would find means to bring His word to pass. He left his country, and went with his father, his wife, and his nephew Lot, under God's guidance, ignorant whither he might be led; "and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there."

Heb. xi. 8.

Gen. xi. 31.

When his father died, he again became a wanderer, and was conducted by God from place to place, still kept in expecta-

tion of the fulfilment of the promise. For the space of five and twenty years he had to endure the trial of that "hope deferred, which maketh the heart sick."

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Prov.
xiii. 12.

But his faith was put to a far severer trial than that of mere delay. The child of his old age grew up, dear from the glories that were promised to his posterity, but dearer, doubtless, to the father's heart, from the cares and anxieties that had preceded his birth. God commanded him to take this only son, and to offer him up as a burnt offering upon a mountain, of which He would tell him in his journey. There is no expostulation, no murmur, no difficulty pleaded on the part of Abraham, although he might have urged the sacredness of God's promise with regard to this child; he might have hinted at the unnatural sin of a parent imbruing his hands in the blood of his offspring; or, at least, he might have asked the reason of such an extraordinary command. But this faithful old man "*rose up early in the morning . . . and went unto the place of which God had told him.*" Many were the mercies that he had received already at the hands of God; mysteriously had he been conducted through many a temptation, and many a peril. It was no time now to doubt. He did not hesitate to put forth his hand to slay his son, whom he had bound as a victim upon the altar; he trusted that God would even yet fulfil His promise, "accounting that He was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure;" and he knew that, in the birth of his son, God had performed a miracle as great, as his resurrection from the dead would be.

Gen. xxii. 2.

Ib. 3.

Heb. xi. 19;
see also, 12.

Nor, as we know, was his faith without its recompense. At this, his last trial, he was hailed by God as one who truly knew, loved, and trusted Him; one who feared Him, in that he did not withhold his only son from Him. The character of Abraham is the most striking instance in Scripture of the resignation of every thought, hope, and feeling, to the will of God, founded upon an implicit trust in His mercy and His truth.

Gen. xxii.
12.

It was by the same spirit that "Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming

LECTURE the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in
 XI. Egypt." From his childhood Moses had been brought up
 Heb. xi. as the son of Pharaoh's daughter: and the Jewish historian
 24, 25. Josephus mentions an old tradition, that, as she was the
 sovereign's only child, he was regarded as heir presumptive
 to the throne; and, as such, was high in esteem and
 Antiq. Jud. power, became their general, and fought their battles with
 l. ii. c. 9. § 6. conduct and success.

Such was his mode of life for forty years: but when he
 Exod. ii. 11. went out unto his brethren, and "looked on their burdens,"
 his heart yearned towards them; and these visits were productive
 of important consequences. It is probable that thus he became
 intimately acquainted with much, of which he had been previously
 ignorant, or, at least, had but partially known:—his own position
 and parentage, the hopes of his countrymen, their privilege in
 being the chosen ones of God, the heirs of the promise of the
 future Saviour. His whole heart was doubtless changed by the
 introduction of a new principle. Faith in Christ, through God,
 gave him another and a correct view of the real value of
 worldly honours, when put into competition with Divine
 commands. He deliberately abandoned the high station and
 the bright hopes in which he had been nurtured, and took his
 part with the despised bondsmen in the land of Goshen. He
 braved the ridicule that the infidel courtiers of Egypt would
 doubtless fling upon him for a choice, which to them would
 seem incomprehensible; he welcomed the afflictions and
 persecutions which the advocacy of his novel opinions was
 sure to entail upon him. He acted thus, because his new-born
 principle of faith assured him, that submission for conscience
 sake to the reproach of man, for the hope of Christ, would
 "lay up for him treasure in heaven," in lieu of those earthly
 riches which he had abandoned; whilst the pleasures of sin
 were but for a season. He, like Noah and Abraham, "had
 respect unto the recompense of the reward."

In the two latter of these cases the reward promised was
 totally unconnected with any temporal advantage. Abraham
 and Moses were distinctly told, that it would not be given
 to them to *see* that Saviour, for the hope of whose coming
 they abandoned all that a worldly spirit would deem

covetable. Generations were to pass away, kingdoms to wither into nothing, new dynasties to subvert the old, a complete moral revolution to take place, before "the fulness of God's time" should come. They "died in faith, not having *received*" (although, that is, they had not received) "the promises," (that is, their fulfilment,) "but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Heb. xi. 13.

When the hope of the coming Saviour was exchanged for the enjoyment of the Saviour come, we find, as we might have expected, that the promises of "God manifest in the flesh," the hope of justification and redemption through Him, wrought as powerful an inworking spirit of faith in them "upon whom the ends of the world had come," as ever did the promises revealed by the Spirit in the patriarchs, and worthies, and prophets of old time. It was this that bore up apostles, saints, confessors, martyrs, above all the temptations and persecutions that surrounded them. It was this spirit of faith, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, that made the once timid fishermen of Galilee confront the heathen ruler on his judgment-seat, and brave the league of Sadducee, Scribe, and Pharisee; this that made the intrepid Apostle Peter declare, as spokesman for the rest, "We ought to obey God rather than men." It was this that made them one and all depart "from the presence of the council," not dismayed at persecution past, or perils yet to come, but according to their divine Master's prophetic admonition, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." It was this supported the holy Paul through shipwreck, stoning, scourging. What were to him, save as so many fresh proofs of God's sustaining grace, his frequent trials, his perils of waters, of robbers, of his own countrymen, of the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, amongst false brethren? What heeded he of his weariness and painfulness, his frequent watchings, his hunger and thirst, his fastings, his cold, his nakedness? The unaided spirit of the natural man would have quailed before these accumulated trials; it must needs have cowered down in

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1 Cor. x. 11.

Acts v. 29.

Luke vi.
22, 23.

Acts v. 41.

See 2 Cor.
xi. 23—28.

LECTURE ^{XI.} terror before the very prospect, much more under the reality of these appalling ills.

But the spirit of the Apostle had a power within of which his persecutors knew not. It enabled him to look with confidence for that grace which was pronounced sufficient for him, 2 Cor. xii. 9. in answer to the prayer of faith. It could soar beyond the grave: like that of Moses, it could look "to the recompense of the reward" reserved for God's perfected saints, when trials, persecutions, sufferings, and temptations, as compared with their eternal heritage of glory, will be remembered only as so many proofs that God's mysterious mercy and love are connected with every dispensation, whether permitted or ordained.

And it was this same spirit which enabled those of our Heb. xi. 38. own country, "of whom the world was not worthy," the Riddleys, the Latimers, and the Cranmers of old times, to emulate the endurance of the saints and martyrs of the early Church, to witness a good confession before God and man, to welcome the prison, the faggot, or the block, and, amidst the flames of martyrdom, to exclaim, as did good old Latimer, Foxe's Martyrs, vol. vii. b. 11. p. 550. "We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as, I trust, shall never be put out."

We too, if rightly we appreciate those means of grace which God has so abundantly given us for the restoration of our souls, are heirs of the same spirit of faith. To us of these latter days God says, as He did to the chosen ones of old, Ps. lxxxi. 10. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." And thus, it is the Christian's privilege as well, to repose in such pious confidence on his God, that he can say of all His dispensations, whether for weal or woe, 2 Sam. xv. 26. "Behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him."

Is the true believer tried in the furnace of affliction? He can take to himself the selfsame consolation that Christ gave to His disciples, when mourning over the prospect of their prophesied bereavement, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." "Troubled" though he may be "on every side," yet is he not "distressed;" he may be "perplexed," but "in despair" he cannot be; "persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed," he

can feel with the Apostle Paul, that, "though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." LECTURE
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2 Cor. iv. 16. How? by the full assurance of faith, that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." If sickness is his Ib. 17. portion, he is still conscious that his God is with him to counsel and to comfort; he can understand how closely the body's trials are connected with the soul's well-being; how sickness is a mercy in disguise; how he may be assured that then the Lord's hand is indeed with him, and laid upon him in tenderness and affection. Though to the worldly eye the affliction may be somewhat heavy to bear, and hard to understand, he will remember that it is written, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

Heb. xii. 6.
Rev. iii. 19.

If poverty be his lot, he will not only call to mind, how often riches are a snare to their possessor, and that, therefore, it may be a proof of God's love when they are withheld; but, even in his worst destitution, he will take comfort from his Saviour's words, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." What stronger assurance of Matt. vi. 32. divine support can the faithful poor possess than this? It is a Father who sees his suffering children, a Father who knows their wants. A child, distant from his earthly father, would be satisfied with the assurance, that he was aware of his distress, knew well his wants, and was able to relieve him. His willingness he would not doubt; and therefore he would rest content until the hour of rescue came. Thus it is with the faithful Christian. He knows that God has done already for him more than the fondest earthly father could or would do for his offspring; and so, though he may doubt whether God's time and his own may be the same, whether God's appreciation of his wants may be as strong as his own sense of them, he will never doubt His love. Sooner or later, he knows that he shall have to say with David, "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Ps. xxxvii.
25.

And let the worst come to the worst: if years and years pass by, and find him still a stranger to the comforts, and almost to the necessities of this life, the eye of faith can

LECTURE realize in part the strange doings of the realm of spirits : it
 {^{XI.} can see Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, thinking little of his sufferings past, except to adore his Father in having sent them to wean him from the undue love of worldly things, and so preserved him from the temptations, the spiritual ignorance, the self-enjoyment, and the punishment of Dives.

Thus, even here, the spiritualized eye of the true believer can perceive a substantial reason *why* he has been so sorely tried : he will feel the effect upon his soul. He will feel that hence he has been taught to know his Maker, and to know himself ; to trust his God, but to distrust himself ; to feel his need both of a Saviour and a Sanctifier ; to pray to Them, to cling to Them, to love Them. And for the yet unseen hereafter, he will be content to await the coming of that hour of perfect revelation, when the darkened glass shall be removed, when he shall see God face to face, and know the Lord's attributes and counsels then, even as He has known His servants' weakness here.

To whom, then, is it given to realize these blessed promises ? whose is the privilege to plead them humbly, yet confidently, before God in prayer ? Theirs, doubtless, who are in *constant* communion with Him, who earnestly seek to be one with their Creator, their Redeemer, and their Sanctifier ; theirs, who "walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of the sinner, nor sit in the seat of the scornful : whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who in that law meditate day and night." The prophet spake here of those who had *long* known the Lord, long walked by faith and not by sight. But this communion is not the work of an hour : not ours to have and to exercise, at the very instant that earthly sorrow draws from the troubled heart the slow admission, that it needs some such comfort—and compels it to fly to God as its only refuge, because earthly hope has fled, and earthly stores of consolation have one by one been shaken off. It is not enough to cry out unto the Lord in the midnight of despair : the day must have been passed in communing with Him. At morning, and at noon-day, and at evening must we have made our prayer unto Him, before we can reasonably hope that He will hear us, when the pleading of distress arises in the hour of darkness

and of trouble. Before we can hope to experience *the full* LECTURE
XI. comfort that the consciousness of God's mysterious presence will afford to His true children, there must long have been the recollection that we are always living in that presence: long must we have felt, that His awful eye is ever bent upon our ways, that His ear is open to our words, that our very thoughts cannot escape His scrutiny.

In human matters, we know that something of this kind must always be. Whom do we trust? on whom do we lean for help? to whom do we apply for counsel or for sympathy? Not to the friend or the acquaintance of yesterday, but to the well-tried, well-known companion of many a by-past year. If, in our intercourse with our fellow-sinners, years and years must pass before we can feel that we know them thoroughly, and so may be able to hold perfect communion with them; if the tie of sympathy is the growth of time, and cemented by the well-proven experience of mutual knowledge and of mutual kindness; if we feel that we are only privileged to apply for aid to the old friend;—why dare we hope, that our heavenly Father will be satisfied with a more slender intercourse, than will our fellow-men; or that He will, at our *first* call, usher us straightway into all the privileges of the tried believer?

It is not enough to present Him with the offering of the very dregs of our existence, whilst we have spent the choice part of our lives in forgetfulness of Him. It is not seemly to pass the morning of our days in following after our own devices, and, when the shades of night are deepening around us, then *first* to come to Him with the mocking submission, "Lo, I am *now* here." Though He is always eventually found of them that seek Him, and though the end of that search is assuredly eternal life, we can scarcely be so unreasonable as to expect, that, if we have never sought Him in the days of our prosperity, the very first pleadings of our sorrow will be heard, and answered on the instant. The wise and humble Christian will not speculate so much upon what God *may* or *can* do, but upon what in His ordinary dealings with mankind He *does* do; and so he will be sure that, in most cases, long must be the trial, patient the waiting, and well-tested the faith, before we can enter into the

Jer. xxix.
13.
Amos v. 4.
Ps. lxxix. 32.

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perfect enjoyment of those privileges which belong to communion with the Lord. There must have been (except in some few special instances, which are exceptions to the general rule,) a long growth in grace, before we can arrive unto "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Eph. iv. 13.

Thus much for our warning, that we may "seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is near:" it is written for our encouragement,—that we might not despair at grace withheld, and search apparently baffled,—

Is. lv. 6.

John vi. 37. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." No; though many a long and (to us) weary year may pass away, and find us, as we think, still unvisited by the Spirit of grace and peace, the prayer of faith can never return to earth unheard and all ungranted. But we must remember, that no time is ever specified, no distinct period marked out, for the fulfilment of God's promise. He seeth not as we see. It may be, that our prayer is not sufficiently earnest; it may be, that our faith will eventually become brighter from being tried in the fire; it may be, that God's mysterious wings are preparing to overshadow us, at the very moment, when we are *almost* tempted to fear, that He will scarcely vouchsafe to touch a heart so stained and scarred with sin.

Whatever may be the hidden counsels of the Lord with regard to His delays, of this we may be sure, that His time for bestowing grace will be the hour of our greatest *real* need.

The Spirit's work hath been begun within us, when conviction of sin will not let us rest, until we have, at least, endeavoured to secure an individual interest in Him, who died to redeem us from all iniquity. And, if we may take, to our soul's comfort, the assurance that God's Spirit has indeed *begun* to warn, our faith must carry us some steps beyond: whilst it bids us remember the awful danger of resisting these warnings, and thus doing despite unto the Spirit of grace, it must not fail to make us cling stedfastly to the promise, "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Phil. i. 6.

LECTURE XII.

ROM. v. 1.

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

ONE more important point connected with the subject of faith remains to be considered: it is the doctrine laid down in the text, that we are justified by faith; or, in the words of our Church, that “we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings.”

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XII.

Art. XI.

It has unfortunately happened, that this fundamental doctrine of Christianity has been much obscured and mystified by the framers of new religious systems; so that many erroneous, or at least perplexed, opinions upon the subject have too generally prevailed.

The holders of these opinions may, perhaps, be reduced to two classes: one maintaining that we can, by our own natural will and exertions, serve God acceptably, and so, in a greater or a less degree, contribute to justify ourselves before Him; the other holding, that we need only believe thus or thus, in order to be saved; and that all the good works even of the regenerate are in no wise conducive to their justification.

The former class is refuted by St. Paul, who, in opposition to the Jews, who relied on the law of Moses, and to the Gentiles, who rested on the law of nature, concludes, that “a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,” whether ritual, ceremonial, or moral¹. The latter class is

Rom. iii. 28.

¹ “Of all the questions respecting religion which were agitated in the first age, this, concerning the justification of sinners by faith *without the works of the law of Moses*, was the most interesting. By the establishment of that doctrine, a bulwark was raised against the re-entering of those superstitions which disfigured the

LECTURE refuted by St. James, who, in addressing converts from
XII.

Judaism, some of whom considered a mere belief in the doctrines, without any obedience to the principles of Christianity, as sufficient for their salvation, proves, that "by James ii. 24. works a man is justified, and not by faith only." It will be interesting to regard the line of argument adopted by each.

In the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle first lays down the position, that the salvation of the soul is by faith alone. Rom. i. 17.
Hab. ii. 4. "The just shall live by *faith*." He then proves the necessity of this method of justification; of our being "accounted righteous before God," that is, "only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not for our own works or deservings;" and he establishes this position by shewing, from a review of Gentile and Jewish manners and opinions, that neither had attained to the righteousness which is by works.

This part of his argument is made clear, as far as the Gentiles are concerned, by an exposure of the foul practices of heathen antiquity, the idolatrous impiety, the gross sensuality, the profligate licentiousness of the most learned and polished nations of the Gentile world.

When the Apostle has thus proved, by a reference to well-known facts, that the Gentiles, even the very best of them, had sinned against that light of nature by which they professed to walk, and therefore could not be supposed to have attained to any righteousness which is by works, he proceeds to shew the same thing with regard to the Jews.

They rested their claim to justification upon the observance of the rites of the ceremonial, and upon obedience to the precepts of the moral law. But he shews that, though Rom. ii. 17. they "rested in the law, and made their boast of God," yet they dishonoured Him by breaking the law; so that "through them the name of God was blasphemed amongst Ib. ver. 24. the Gentiles." In another Epistle he proves, that the sacrifices of the law, however perfectly performed, are yet unable

preceding forms of religion. For, if the sacrifices and ceremonies of the law of Moses, which were all of Divine appointment, had no efficacy in procuring the pardon of sin, none of the rites of men's invention, on which the superstitious set such a value, can have any influence in procuring that blessing."—Forster's Apostolical Authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews, sect. xi. p. 417.

to justify. The very act of sacrifice for sin implies both the consciousness and the reality of sin, on the part of the sacrificer; for the Jewish high priest was ordered to present a sin-offering for himself, before he presumed to enter into the Lord's presence, to offer up the sacrifice of the atonement for the sins of the people. Having thus "proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin," and that the awful declaration of Scripture, "There is none that doeth good, no not one," is a sentence that admits of no exception, the conclusion to which he arrives is, that, by the deeds of the law, whether of nature or of Moses, "there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." The consequence is clear; that some other means must be discovered of acquittal from inherited corruption and individual guilt, of deliverance from the power of sin, and of obtaining justifying grace.

Where, then, are we to look for these means? Obedience fails, for we have seen it is at best imperfect. Repentance will stand us in no stead, for it cannot undo the past. Even angels, pure and passionless as they are, could not offer "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world" to Him, in whose sight the very "heavens are not clean," and who charges even "His angels with folly." We are brought to the conclusion, that "none but God Himself could provide the means of so tempering justice with mercy, as to extend the one without disparagement of the other."

And God has done it. "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him, and His righteousness, it sustained Him." And thus, when no means of reconciliation from any other quarter were available, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." It was thus that God provided Himself "a lamb for a burnt-offering;" thus, that, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

The sacrifice, then, of the Son of God is the meritorious cause of our justification. "God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God

LECTURE
XII.

Heb. vii. 27.
Levit. xvi. 6.
Rom. iii. 9.

Ps. xiv. 3.

Rom. iii. 20.

Commun.
Service.

Job xv. 15.
xxv. 4—6.
iv. 18.

Van Mil-
dert's
Serm. vol. i.
p. 346.

Is. lix. 16.

2 Cor. v. 19.

Gen. xxii. 8.

Gal. iv. 4, 5.

LECTURE in Him." God pardons our sins, adopts us into His family, XII. bestows upon us His grace, imparts to us a new principle, 2 Cor. v. 21. accounts us as righteous, and admits us into His presence, not because He is well pleased in us, but in His Son; not because we have acted thus or thus, but because Christ has done that for us which we could not have done for ourselves —satisfied the justice of God for us, paid the penalty of our original sin and personal guilt.

Nothing can be more explicit than the manner in which St. Paul proves that the forgiveness of our sins, the being placed in "a state of salvation," the implanting of the first seeds of divine life, are blessings which we can obtain only as a free gift through Jesus Christ, and not of our own works or deservings; and that the medium through which we so obtain them is FAITH.

Rom. So important a doctrine did St. Paul consider this, so passim. utterly impossible did he believe salvation to be without it, 1 Cor. vi. 11. that he never omits an opportunity of enforcing it; nor is 2 Cor. v. 18. there one of his Epistles, with the solitary exception of Gal. iii. 22. that to Philemon, in which it is not insisted upon in explicit Eph. ii. terms. 4, &c. Phil. iii. 9. Coloss. i. 19, &c. 1 Thess. v. 9. 2 Thess. ii. 16.

That the primitive Church received this doctrine in all its fulness, we have the testimony of St. Clement, the fellow-labourer and companion of St. Paul. After saying of the 1 Tim. ii. 6. Jewish worthies, that they all received glory and honour, 2 Tim. ii. 10. neither through themselves nor their works, nor their right- Titus iii. 5.eous dealings which they exercised, but through His will, he Heb. ix. 11. continues thus:—"In like manner, we who have been called by His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, neither by our own wisdom or understanding, or piety, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart, but by the faith by which Almighty God has justified all from the beginning: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Since such is the vital importance of justification, it becomes an interesting question to ascertain, at what period of our lives we may reasonably look for it.

The thirteenth Article of our Church expressly states, that "works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of His Spirit, have the nature of sin." It is a scriptural declaration, for our Saviour says, that the tree must be good

before it can produce holy fruit; and St. Paul tells us, that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." In other words, before we can do any thing pleasing or acceptable to God, nay, before we can act without sin, we must be justified. Our Church, then, fixes the date of our initiatory justification at our Baptism; of which, in the language of the learned Barrow, it "is by St. Paul made the immediate consequent or special adjunct: therein, he saith, we die to sin (by resolution, and engagement to lead a new life in obedience to God's commandment), and so dying, we are said to be justified from sin." It is thus that God not only accounts as righteous, through regeneration, those who by nature are unrighteous; but freely, and without any merit of our own, implants in us, as His adopted children, the power and the desire to do His will and pleasure. If this be not the case, if Baptism be not "the seal of justification, and the beginning of sanctification;" if the righteousness of Christ be not then imparted to the infant, what ground have we for saying with our Church, "It is certain by God's word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved?"

LECTURE
XII.

John xv.
4, 5.
Rom. xiv. 23.

Barrow on
Just.
Serm. v.
vol. iv. p. 375.
Cyril. Cat.
Lect. Introd.
16.

Bp. Horne
on Eph. iv. 7.
vol. ii. p. 349.
Note at the
end of the
Office for
Baptism.

Justification is, or is not, necessary to salvation; if it is, how are infants saved if they be not justified? And if they be justified, how are the merits of Christ imparted to them, except through the laver of regeneration? Our blessed Saviour Himself seems to have decided the point in the words, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved."

Mark xvi.
16.

"This," says Archbishop Cranmer in one of the earliest documents of the Reformation, "is the very plain, ordinary way, by the which God hath determined that man, being of age, and coming to Christendom, should be justified. For, as for infants, it is to be believed that their justification is wrought by the secret operation of the Holy Ghost in their Baptism, they being offered in the faith of the Church. And this justification may be called the first justification, that is to say, our first coming into God's house, which is the Church of Christ; at which coming we be received and admitted to be of the flock and family of our Saviour Christ, and be professed and sworn to be the servants of God, and to be soldiers under Christ, to fight against our enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh."

Necessary
Doctrine
and Erudi-
tion,
Art. Just.
See also
Cranmer's
Catechism,
3rd Serm.
on Sanct.
Homily on
Salvat. p. 1.
On Good
Works, p. 1.

LECTURE
XII.

And there are many passages in St. Paul's Epistles confirmatory of this view of justification ; for he frequently speaks of it as concurrent with baptismal regeneration and absolution. "Such were some of you," he says to the Corinthians, when, whilst alluding to their past sins, he reminds them of their present altered position ; "but ye *are* washed, ye *are* sanctified, ye *are* justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God²." Again, "in his Epistle to Titus, he unites salvation and justification, describing them as the fruit of baptismal regeneration, and as the introduction to the inheritance of eternal life." "According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour ; that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

1 Cor. vi. 11.

Mant's
Bampt.
Lect. p. 69.

Tit. iii. 5—7.

Serm. v. on
the Apost.
Creed, vol.
iv. p. 387.

ib. p. 386.

"St. Paul, in the sixth to the Romans," says the learned Barrow, "discourseth thus : 'Seeing we, in Baptism, are cleansed, and disentangled from sin, are dead to it, and so justified from it, God forbid that we should return to live in the practice thereof, so abusing and evacuating the grace we have received ;' which discourse seemeth plainly to signify, that he treateth about the justification conferred in Baptism." We may conclude, then, with the same accurate theologian, "that the justification which St. Paul discourseth of, seemeth in his meaning, only, or especially, to be that act of grace which is dispensed to persons at their Baptism, or at their entrance into the Church ; when they openly professing their faith, and undertaking the practice of Christian duty, God most solemnly and formally doth absolve them from all guilt, and accepteth them into a state of favour with Him."

² The force of the original is not preserved in the translation. In the recital of these baptismal blessings, the Apostle speaks of them as of things *past and done* ; ἀπελούσασθε, ἡγιασθητε, ἐδικαιώθητε. And it should not be forgotten, that the whole body of Christians is frequently addressed by the titles of "the saved," "the elect," "the called," and the like, in opposition to the great *mass* of unbelievers, without any reference to the faith of *individual* believers. See 1 Cor. i. 18 ; xv. 1, 2 ; Coloss. iii. 12 ; Tit. i. 1 ; 1 Pet. i. 2 ; Rom. i. 7 ; 1 Cor. i. 2, 24, &c. So also in Acts ii. 47, where it is said that "the Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved ;" in the original it is, "the saved," τοὺς σωζομένους, well translated by Wiclif, "them that weren made saaf."

This wholesome doctrine of the Church of England will be made more clear by a comparison of her eleventh and thirteenth Articles. In the former, which treats "of the justification of Man," we are told, that "we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings." In the latter, which treats "of works before justification," "the nature of the 'works and deservings,' intended by the eleventh Article, is expressly stated in the title, while the doctrine of justification itself is formally defined in the body of the Article; where 'works before justification' are explained to be 'works done before *the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of His Spirit*;' a definition whence it irrefragably follows, that 'the justification of man,' and this reception of 'the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of His Spirit,' are one and the same thing; in other words, that *individual* justification consists, not in what has been done collectively *for* man, but in what is done individually *in* man, by the grace and power of Christ."

LECTURE
XII.

Forster's
Apost.
Authority
of the
Hebrews,
sect. xi.
p. 429, note.

It seems to be almost an innate feeling with man, to endeavour to effect something of himself as contributing meritoriously, if not to his justification, at least to his continuance in a justified state, as well as to his final salvation. It was very conspicuous in the case of the Pharisee, who held that there was merit stored up for him on the score of his observance, not only of the law, but of the traditions that he had engrafted upon it, and who believed that he might claim reward at the hands of God on account of his good works. It was doubtless with a clear understanding of the prejudices of his countrymen on this point, that St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, takes such extraordinary pains to shew the vanity of depending upon the works of the Mosaic law, as a ground of justification. And he was better able, humanly speaking, to counsel them on these matters, in that he himself, as a Pharisee brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, must, in the earlier part of his life, have felt the power of the selfsame prejudices. It was surely with a conviction that the temper of man has, in all cases, a natural tendency to endeavour to gain by merit something of that *all*, which is bestowed by grace, that, in his Epistles to the Gentile converts, he is equally

LECTURE explicit in declaring that human desert, considered as contri-
 XII. buting to our justification, is nothing in the sight of God.

The very earnestness of his arguments, as addressed to the Jews, is sufficient to shew us that the false notions, which he was so anxious to disprove, were no shadows, no possible errors into which they *might* fall, but realities: errors into which they *had* fallen; errors which, if persisted in, would entirely destroy the leading principles of the Christian faith.

Nor were these errors confined to the Jews, nor limited to a single age. The principle of resting in part on human merit remained long after the polity of Jerusalem, in all its integrity, was numbered amongst the things that had been. And thus, as successors to the Pharisee who strove to work out his salvation, not with fear and trembling, but with an arrogant assumption of personal merit on the score of his superior sanctity, we find the ascetics of the earlier days of Christianity, the stylites of following ages, the monks, and friars, and hermits, and nuns of later times, each and all, more or less, undermining the only sure ground of justification and acceptance through Christ, by attaching *merit* to fastings and penance, to scourgings and privations, to celibacy, and to austerities, of which the fanciful extravagance was exceeded only by their unscriptural tendency.

Bingham's
Ecc. Ant.
l. vii.
Fosbrooke's
Brit. Monachism;
Gibbon's
Decline and
Fall,
c. xxxvii.
Concil.
Trident.
Sess. xiv.
c. 9.

Catech.
Trident. ad
Ordinandos,
p. i. sect. iv.
Concil. Trident.
Sess. vi.
can. 32, de
Justificat.

But it remained for the council of Trent, to sanction the doctrine of human merit, as a contributing cause to our justification; a doctrine which, if it does not almost elevate the creature to the level of the Creator, but ill befits him, whom Christ pronounced, even at the best, "an unprofitable servant," and who, in the truth-telling language of our Liturgy, is constantly addressed by his legitimate title of "miserable sinner." Well were it for the Romish Church to take counsel of one who has laid bare their false doctrines, not by declamatory abuse, but by an argumentative exposition of the simple truth; "for how," asks the learned Beveridge, "is it possible that the works of finite creatures, or any thing but the merits of Christ, should be able to blot out the sins that are committed against an infinite Creator? or, that the fig-leaves of our own pretended merits should hide our nakedness from the eyes of an all-seeing God? And if we cannot expiate our sins, how can we justify our persons? If we cannot but be

accounted sinners for all our works, how can we be accounted as righteous for any of them?"

But whilst we would shrink from the impiety of attempting to divide with Christ the great work of our justification, we must carefully keep in view, that we abide in a justified state only "so long as we continue to perform the conditions imposed by God, and undertaken by us at our first justification; 'holding fast the profession of our faith without wavering, keeping faith and a good conscience;' so long as we do not forfeit the benefit of that grace, by 'making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience,' relapsing into infidelity, or profaneness of life." An apposite illustration of this remark may be found in the parable of the unforgiving servant. His debt was freely forgiven by his lord; he was justified: but he sinned away the grace thus given to him, by his unfeeling conduct to his fellow-servant; the forgiveness was recalled; he was unpardoned again; his debt was once more charged upon him; he was cast into prison, and delivered over to the tormentors until he should pay the uttermost farthing.

Earnestly then as the Apostle insists upon faith, and faith only, as the primary cause of our justification, as strongly does he urge the necessity of the justified man exhibiting good works, or holiness of life, as the fruits of a justifying faith. The great object that he seems to have had in view was, to establish the sacrifice of Christ as the only real ground of justification, and to exclude both the works of the law and simple morality from being considered as meritorious accessories to it. But the Apostle never meant to say, (as has been supposed by some,) that faith was thus to stand alone, unaccompanied by any other evangelical grace, as a test of its reality, and a result of its soundness. In fact, the language of the Apostle is peculiarly guarded upon this very point, and framed, it would almost seem, with the express desire that he should not be misunderstood, as sanctioning those Antinomian positions which he has been made, by some, to advocate. If he says, "Ye are bought with a price," he is careful to add, "*therefore* glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." We are reminded of our privileges as being "called unto liberty;" but there is a warning that follows, both doctrinal and practical, "only, use not liberty

LECTURE
XII.

Beveridge
on Art. XI.
See also
Justin. Ep.
ad Diog. ix.

Barrow, ut
supra, vol.
iv. p. 388.

Matt. xviii.
23; see also
Hammond's
Pract. Cat.
b. i. § 3.

1 Cor. vi. 20.

- LECTURE for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”
 XII.
 Gal. v. 13, see also 1. We are told for our comfort, that “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men:” it is added, for our instruction, that this Gospel teaches us, that “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” And, in the succeeding chapter of the same Epistle, St. Paul’s charge to Titus is, that, whilst he inculcated a right view of doctrine, he should preach to believers the necessity of acting as if they believed: “these things,” he says, “I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.” And he reminds his disciple, that “Christ gave Himself for us,” not that our faith in His merits should there stop, and give no evidence of its soundness by its purity of practice, “but that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” So, also, St. Peter exhorts us to “*add* to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.” Why does the Apostle thus distinctly state that there is much, very much, to be *added* to our faith? why is he thus earnest and detailed in this catalogue of Christian graces? He tells us in the next verse; “for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ:” but, he adds, “he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins;” has forgotten, that is, that he was ever placed in a state of salvation, and was justified by faith in Christ. St. John also tells us, that this practical godliness is the necessary result of a *real* hope in Christ: the tree that is nourished by such a divine principle *must* bring forth good fruit: “every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure.” “This faith, this justifying faith,” says Archbishop Sandys, “doth work through love, and sheweth itself by works. The good tree will be fruitful. The believing justified child of God will fear God, and work righteousness.”
- 1 John v. 1. True then is it that, “whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the

Christ, is born of God ;” but we must not forget that the child so born must give evidence of his new birth. “Christ, being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation ;” to whom? not to the sluggard, not to the formalist, not to the *mere believer*, but “unto all them that obey Him :” and, may we not safely say, to them alone? to them, who are not satisfied with the empty cry of “Lord, Lord,” but are anxious to pay a practical attention to that Lord’s counsel, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

LECTURE XII.
Heb. v. 9.
Matt. v. 16.

Thus, holiness of life is inseparable from true faith : and thus we conclude, that no one can continue in a justified state but he who lives in a sanctified state ; for the atonement offered up by Christ, though it pays that debt of sin which we have all incurred, and, as far as *He* is concerned, pays it without qualification ; yet, as far as *we* are concerned, it pays it only in proportion as we make a right use of those faculties with which God has invested us, obey those rules which He has given us, and avail ourselves of those means of grace which He has so abundantly bestowed upon us.

These considerations, then, will shew how entirely they misconceive the Apostle’s arguments who discover nothing but contradictory views, on the subject of justification, in the writings of St. Paul and St. James. “By grace are ye saved, through faith,” is the language of the former, “and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast.” “Ye see then,” says the latter, “how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

Eph. ii. 8, 9.

James ii. 24.

St. Paul wrote, either to Jews, who had for ages looked to the works of the Mosaic law as the means of their justification, and who were naturally loth to part with a doctrine which they had imbibed with their earliest years, or else to Gentiles, who had been taught by Judaizing teachers that they were to be justified, in part at least, by the ceremonies of the self-same law. The Apostle was anxious to clear up their mistakes on this head ; and strongly insists upon faith in Christ as the only means of justification, to the utter exclusion of the Mosaic law, which, as “having a shadow of good things to come,” was done away at the appearance of the substance. He was desirous also to shew them, that

Heb. x. 1.

LECTURE
XII. *no works, whether ritual, moral, or ceremonial, can of themselves justify; but that Christ's merits are the sole and exclusive cause of justification. We have seen, by his many exhortations to personal holiness, following, as they do, so closely his inculcations of the all-sufficiency of faith, that he at least considered it impossible for the justified man to be otherwise than holy. In all his arguments he presupposed that he, who was one of Christ's "peculiar people," must, at the same time, be "zealous of good works." And in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews it is remarkable, that the most striking examples of faith there brought forward are of those, who acted because they believed. Their faith was a practical faith, "the faith which worketh by love." Therefore we are warranted in concluding, that St. Paul held, that though the promise of justification through faith had no respect unto the *past*, yet that it must have a reference to the *future*.*

St. James, on the other hand, was evidently aware, that, guarded as were St. Paul's expressions, his arguments had been misconstrued and perverted, wrested, as St. Peter tells us, by the unlearned and unstable to their own destruction. And, surely, it was in the spirit of prophecy that he wrote, as knowing that, in succeeding ages, the doctrine of "justification by faith *only*" would be turned to the unholiest purposes by those, who were more anxious to profess what *they* called the doctrines of the Gospel, than to abide by its self-denying precepts. His aim, then, is not to contradict St. Paul, but rather to explain his meaning; and this he effects by shewing, that faith is not a passive, but an active principle; not limited to believing the doctrines of Christianity as a question of theory, but extended to receiving them as a matter of practice. He shews, how perfectly possible it is for a man to believe in the truth of every doctrinal point, and yet not to have that justifying faith such as his brother Paul described. He tells us that the devils have a *sort* of faith (precisely as we know that mere nominal Christians have): they believe that there is a God; they are compelled to do so, for they have felt His power, and experience His wrath: "they believe and tremble." This is a dead faith; belief without godliness, theory without practice, faith with-

Tit. ii. 14.

Gal. v. 6.
See also
Heb. xi.
33, 34.

2 Pet. iii. 16.

James ii.
14, 15, 16.

Ib. 19.

out works : and the Apostle implies, that a faith like this is as little able to justify, as the body is to move, without the power of the spirit to give it motion ; “as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” He explains what a living faith is, by taking two examples that St. Paul had given of justifying faith, Abraham and Rahab. He shews that Abraham’s faith did not stop at merely believing in the truth of God’s word, which commanded him to offer up his son Isaac ; but that he obeyed His injunctions to the letter, without a murmur, without a question ; he shewed his faith by his works : he “believed God ;” his conduct was an evidence of the sincerity of his belief, “and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.” So too, in the case of Rahab ; what would her *belief* have profited her, if she had betrayed the messengers of Israel, instead of concealing them, and providing for their escape ? She was not satisfied with believing and acknowledging that they were sent of God ; but she gave, by her conduct, the best evidence of her sincerity in saying, “I *know* that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.”

LECTURE
XII.

James ii. 26.

Ib. 23.

Josh. ii. 9.

St. James, then, uses the same examples as St. Paul, to prove the same point : the main difference between them is, that the former is more careful to explain the necessary coherence between faith and works, in order to correct misunderstandings which had arisen ; the latter suffers it to be inferred from the general scope of his argument, writing at an earlier period, before any such misconceptions had taken place. St. Paul reproves those who were disposed to consider obedience as meritorious ; St. James condemns those who refused to look upon obedience as a test of sincerity : and it should be carefully observed, that when St. Paul speaks of faith, he speaks of it, as he wished to inculcate it, namely, as the genuine spirit of active Christianity ; when St. James speaks of faith, he alludes to that false spirit of inactive Christianity, which they whom he addressed mis-called faith. We may safely conclude, then, that the Apostle, who so earnestly besought his brethren, by the mercies of God, to “present their bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,” would have used the self-same language

Rom. xii. 1.

LECTURE as did St. James, if he had been called upon to address the
 XII. same people, to clear up the same mistakes, to combat with the same prejudices, and to notice the same low standard of evangelical obligation³.

In thus considering the necessary connexion between faith and works, the Christian disciple will be careful to distinguish between works as the result of simple morality, and works as the consequence of Christian principle. The moralist will regard expediency; he will look to his own convenience or advantage; he will defer to the world's opinion, its applause, its censure, its conventional usages, and he will regulate his actions accordingly. Works of this description will come under St. Paul's condemnation: as they are not the fruits of a justifying faith, so they are not evidences of, nor conducive to, our continuance in a justified state; they have, in fact, no reference whatever to our justification. The Christian, whose faith is fruitful in good works, will strive in all things to conform to the will of his heavenly Father: his actions are founded on His word; they have always in view those two great principles of love to God for his own sake, and love to man for God's sake, which, when combined, are comprehended by St. Paul in the single word "charity." These are works, to which the words of St. James apply, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith

S. Clem.
Ep. ad Cor.
33.

James ii. 24. only."

³ The sentiments of St. Paul and St. James, says St. Augustine, are not contrary to each other; the former speaks of works which precede faith, the latter of works which follow it.—S. August. 83 Quæst. l. ix. c. 76.

LECTURE XIII.

2 TIM. i. 13.

“Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me.”

It has been sometimes a matter of regret, perhaps too even of complaint, with the well-meaning Christian, who is desirous of having an indisputable summary of the necessary points of faith, that no such summary, no creed, in short, is to be found in the New Testament. LECTURE
XIII.

Let us only admit as proven the inspiration of the evangelical writers, and then we may safely conclude, that, had the Giver of “every good and perfect gift” judged it right, to furnish the Christian world with any such condensed epitome as might have been adapted to every age and country alike, the Apostles would assuredly have been directed to put it forth. He, who knows best our wants, has decided otherwise; and the very fact of the omission alluded to is of itself sufficient evidence, that the sacred writers were supernaturally withheld from supplying it, “how little soever we may be able even to conjecture the object of the prohibition.” James i. 17.

But we may perhaps, without presumption, attempt to account for that, which at first sight may seem to contravene the position already laid down with regard to Scripture, namely, that God’s supply has always kept even pace with our necessities.

Whately’s
Essays.

See Lect.
vi. p. 51.

Not to mention, that the writings of the New Testament are obviously addressed to persons already acquainted with the elements of Christian truth, the very indirect and unsystematic method of teaching, adopted in them, has its advantages. It renders necessary, to those who would fain be spiritually wise, a careful study of the holy volume. It leads them to examine for themselves, instead of indolently

See Hawkins’s
Bampt.
Lect. p. 48.
Serm. ii.

LECTURE XIII. resting on the authority of others, to compare Scripture with itself, to weigh the relative value of particular texts and passages, that so they may draw from thence a clear system of doctrinal and practical truth. Never, had there been a complete formulary of faith in the Scriptures, never should we have possessed those treasures of theological wisdom and research, which are now the delight and ornament of the Christian world. Religious indolence would have taken the place of religious anxiety, and "the tranquil security as to the correctness of our belief which would have been thus generated, would have ended in a careless and contented apathy. There would have been no room for doubt, no call for vigilant attention in the investigation of truth, none of that effort of mind which is now requisite, in comparing one passage with another, and collecting instruction from the scattered, oblique, and incidental references to various doctrines in the existing Scriptures; and, in consequence, none of that excitement of the best feelings, and that improvement of the heart, which are the natural, and doubtless the designed result of an humble, diligent, and sincere study of the Christian Scriptures."

Whately's
Essays.
Hawkins's
Bampt. Lect.
Serm. ii.

Acts viii.
36, 37.
xvi. 30—33.
August. de
Temp.
Serm. cxv. 1.
Hieron.
Epist. 61.
ad Pam.
Cyril.
Catech. xix.
9. Myst. 1.

But, notwithstanding the total absence of a creed in the New Testament, it seems natural to suppose, (as indeed we gather from ecclesiastical history,) that the first teachers of Gospel truths would require some confession of those truths, before they admitted their converts to the sacrament of Baptism.

In the infancy of the Church, whilst it was yet unassailed by heresy and division, it would follow, almost as a matter of course, that these confessions, or "forms of sound words," would be exceedingly simple in character, unlaboured and concise, abstaining from details, and limited to a declaration of the mere elements of faith.

It seems probable, then, that all which was at first required of the candidate for Baptism was a profession of belief in the three persons of the Blessed Trinity, in whose name they were baptized, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; a confession, that Jesus was Christ or the Saviour of the world, of the remission of sins, and of the resurrection of the flesh through Him.

King on
the Creed,
c. i. p. 35.

In their method of using creeds the early Christians seem to have followed the practice of the Jews, who allowed each master or teacher of theology to use his own mode of instruction, his own prayers, his own compendium of faith. Scattered then as were the members of Christ's Church into different countries, each branch of that Church, at the same time, adopting those forms of instruction which seemed most advisable, and those minor points of discipline that appeared best suited to the minds of those with whom they had to deal, we find, in the writings of the Fathers who flourished from the end of the second to the close of the third century, many creeds, differing in expression, but agreeing in substance; some more explicit and detailed than others; all, without exception, embracing the cardinal truths of the Gospel, all putting forth, as necessary to salvation, a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity¹.

LECTURE
XIII.
Horne's
Introd.
vol. iii. pt. 3.
c. 4. p. 296.
5th edit.

These creeds were none of them the growth of a single age. Simple at first, they were enlarged from time to time, as the increase of heresies rendered the insertion of new clauses necessary, in order that the faithful might have an effectual antidote against the poison attempted to be introduced. And thus we find, that the Catholic Church has handed down to us three principal creeds, which from a very early period were adopted as orthodox confessions of Christian faith, and subsequently received into the liturgies of the Western Church, and are now incorporated into our own formularies². These three are "the Apostles'," or Roman

¹ In the primitive Church, "all bishops had power to frame the creeds of their own Churches, and express them in such terms as suited best their own convenience, and to meet with the heresies they were most in danger from."—Bingham's *Eccles. Antiq.* b. ii. c. 6. s. 3.

See also the collection of ancient creeds, extracted by Bingham from the writings of Irenæus, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Lucian the Martyr, Cyril of Jerusalem; together with that found in the Apostolical Constitutions, &c. b. x. c. 4.

² The Roman or Apostles' Creed was, confessedly, the earliest that was received as a general confession of faith. The Nicene Creed, the first that was adopted in the liturgical services of the Church, was introduced into the Liturgy of Antioch by Peter Fullo, patriarch of that Church, A.D. 471, probably, according to Palmer, for the purpose of excluding heretics more effectually from the communion. (*Origines Liturgicæ*, vol. ii. c. 4. s. 6.) It was afterwards received by Timotheus into the Liturgy of Constantinople, A.D. 511. From

LECTURE Creed; "the Nicene," or Constantinopolitan; and that which
 XIII. bears the name of St. Athanasius: the first being "a mere exposition or statement of the primary articles of the Christian faith; the second, a brief explanation of some of those articles; and the third, a defence of the several articles from the misconstructions and forced interpretations of certain sects and parties."

Nares on
 the Creeds,
 p. 9.

There was an old opinion in the Church, that the Apostles were really the authors of the creed that bears their name, an opinion which has found supporters in modern times. "The Apostles," says St. Ambrose, "like wise workmen, being met together, by their counsel forged a key; for I may call the Creed itself a certain key, whereby the darkness of the devil is opened, and the light of Christ comes in." And Ruffinus, in his well-known exposition of the Creed, tells us, that they had received by tradition from their ancestors, that, after the ascension of our Saviour and the effusion of the Holy Ghost, before the Apostles separated from each other to go into the several parts of the habitable world, to preach the Gospel to them, they settled amongst themselves the rule of their future preaching, to prevent their teaching different doctrines, during their separation, unto those whom they should invite to the Christian faith; wherefore they assembled all together, and, being full of the Holy Ghost, composed the Creed, each one inserting what he thought convenient; and they ordained it to be a test of their future preaching, and a rule to be given unto the faithful. The same view is taken by several of the later Fathers, and, in one of the sermons ascribed to St. Augustine, each article of the Creed is assigned to its respective author³.

S. Ambros.
 de Elia et
 Jej.
 Id. Epist.
 81. ad
 Syric. s. 5.
 Comber's
 Companion
 to the Tem-
 ple, p. 1.
 s. 18. § 1.
 Sparrow's
 Rationale.
 Jer. Taylor's
 Diss. from
 Popery,
 p. ii. s. 4.
 Beveridge
 on Art.
 VIII.

Ruff. in
 Symb. s. 2.
 See Be-
 veridge on
 Art. VIII.
 Aug. de.
 Temp.
 Serm. cxv.

That, from the earliest days, the Church possessed and used a form of faith not much unlike our present Creed, is

whose example it was brought into the Spanish Churches, A.D. 589.—Bingham, b. xiv. c. 2. s. 8.

It was not until A.D. 1014 that a creed found its way into the Roman Liturgy, (Bingham, b. x. c. 4. s. 17) although it had been introduced into that of the English Church as early as A.D. 820. Palmer's Orig. Lit. vol. i. c. i. pt. i. s. 14.

³ It is certainly singular, that the number of clauses in the Creed should coincide with that of the Apostles: and it is worthy of remark, that each of these clauses may be collected from St. Peter's discourses in the Acts. See Townsend's New Test. vol. ii. p. 105. Horne on the Trinity and Ath. Creed, p. 180.

more than probable; but that the Apostles themselves were its immediate authors, or that it has been handed down to us in its present form, without variation or addition, may be reasonably doubted. LECTURE
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First, Ruffinus himself states, that the clause "He descended into hell," was neither in the Roman nor Oriental creeds; the "communion of saints" we know was not in any creed until above four hundred years after Christ, and then not immediately received into all. The clause "life everlasting" was inserted in some, but omitted in others. Were this the only evidence, it would be conclusive, that the Apostles were not the composers of the Creed that passes under their name: but there are other reasons.

Scripture is wholly silent respecting any such document; a silence perfectly unaccountable, presuming it to have been really in existence. Again, if the Fathers of the first three centuries had possessed so valuable and authorized a rule of faith, is it credible that they would not have adopted it in preference to their own purely human compositions, or that they would have failed to appeal to it as to an unimpeachable standard of orthodoxy, when heresies were on every side around them? But, "during this period," although these Fathers, "in their disputes with the heretics, had frequent occasion to prove that the doctrines of the Creed were the doctrines taught by the Apostles, they no where hint that the Creed itself was composed by them; an argument which they would naturally have urged; for, since both parties admitted the authority of the Apostles, the proof of this would have terminated the dispute."

We may safely conclude, then, that this Creed is called "the Apostles'," not from having been actually written by them, but because its main features may be traced up to them; as putting forth their doctrines, and embodying the leading points of faith sanctioned by them and their successors⁴. Its origin may unquestionably be traced to the preach-

Ruff. in
Symb. s. 20.
Pearson, in
loc., and see
his notes.
King on the
Creed, p. 30.
Bingham,
b. x. c. 3.
s. 5.
Shepherd on
the Com.
Prayer,
in loc.
Tomline on
Art. VIII.

Shepherd on
the Com.
Prayer,
vol. i. p. 214.

Vossius, de
trib. Symb.
Usher, de
Symb. Rom.
Suiceri
Thes. in voc.
σύμβολον.

⁴ Wall gives another reason: "It was a custom," he says, "to call those Churches in which any Apostle had personally taught, especially if he had resided there any long time, or had died there, *Apostolic Churches*. Of these were a great many in the Eastern parts, . . . but in the Western none but Rome: in which St. Paul and St. Peter had lived a considerable time, and were there

LECTURE
XIII.

Bull. Judic.
Ecc. Cath.
c. v. n. 3.
Calvini Inst.
1. ii. c. 16.
s. 18.
Bingham,
Ecc. Ant.
b. x. c. 3.
s. 5.
King on the
Creed, c. i.
p. 27. 38.
Nares on the
Creeds,
Serm. i.
p. 29. 30.
Ambros. de
Virgin. l. iii.
c. iv. s. 20.
Ruff. de
Symb. s. ii.
Augustin.
de Temp.
Serm. cxxxi.
King on the
Creed, c. i.
p. 44.

ing, and, in part, to the language of the Apostles; and the foundation of the Creed was doubtless used by them in their catechetical instructions. Its increase was the consequence of successive heresies, each, as it arose, drawing forth from the existing rulers of the Church a solemn protest against it.

Its claims to our affection and respect have thus been summed up by an able expositor: "It hath been received in all ages with the greatest veneration and esteem. The ancients declare their respect and reverence for it with the most noble and majestic expressions; and, in these latter times, throughout several centuries of years, so great a deference hath been rendered thereunto, as that it hath not been only used at Baptism, but in every public assembly it hath been usually, if not always, read as the standard and basis of the Christian faith."

And well had it been for the good name of the Church of Christ, if the circumstances of the times had never demanded more than a mere statement or confession of the leading points of faith, and if the rapid growth of heresy had not required their careful explanation and defence. But such a state of things was not to be.

We have seen that, from a very early period, the pride of human intellect rebelled against the simplicity of the Gospel. The "learned ones," the Gnostics of those days, were ill disposed that the unlettered, who had not that insight into philosophy which they had laboured so incessantly to acquire, should enjoy the same religious privileges as themselves.

They were desirous to make religious faith itself a mystery, an abstract science to be locked up from the unlearned, and to remain the exclusive heritage of the wise; and thus they crowded one speculative theory upon another, each having, more or less, the same tendency, namely, to deny or explain away the divinity of our blessed Saviour. It is well known that St. John's Gospel was directed against the various forms

martyred. So that any one that, in the western parts of the world, spoke of the Apostolic Church, was supposed to mean Rome; that being the only one in those parts, and being called emphatically by all the Western Christians *the Apostolic Church*. And so their bishop came to be called the Apostolic Bishop; their see, the Apostolic see; their faith, the Apostolic faith; and among the rest, the creed that they used, the Apostolic Creed."—Wall, on Inf. Bapt. pt. ii. ch. 9. § 13.

Lect. vii.
p. 67.

Lect. vii.
p. 67.

of this heresy; and, for a while, it seems, that the labours of the Apostle had their intended effect; and, for more than three hundred years, the great body of the Church (with few and unimportant exceptions) was content to believe in the divinity as well as in the humanity of Christ. During this period it was thought sufficient, as far as the Creed was concerned, to combat these heresies by a plain declaration of Gospel truths; and, though "some form or other of the Gnostic philosophy led to the insertion of nearly all the clauses which gradually composed the Apostles' Creed," it was not until the fourth century, that the active impiety of one false brother drew from the Church, in the form of a second Creed, an explanation as well as a statement of the principles of the orthodox faith.

LECTURE
XIII.
Burton's
Lect. on
Eecl. Hist.
xi. p. 333.
Nares on the
Creeds,
p. 49.

The poison infused into the Church of Christ by some of the early heretics was more easily exposed than eradicated from its system. It had been kept up silently and almost imperceptibly in the Alexandrian schools by sundry teachers, who substituted the most fanciful extravagances for the sober simplicity of Christian truth.

W.D. Cony-
beare's
Bampt.
Lect. iv.
Burton's
Lect. on
Eecl. Hist.
xxx. p. 490.

Arius, "a subtle-witted, and a marvellous fair-spoken man," at that time priest and pastor of the Church of Baucalis, in the diocese of Alexandria, began publicly to put forth the leading features of that heresy to which his name has since given so unhappy a notoriety. He taught "that our Lord Jesus Christ had been created, like all other things, by God; that He was not truly God, but a creature liable to fall into vice and sin, and that there was a time when He did not exist."

Hooker,
Eecl. Pol.
b. v. c. 42.
s. 2.

Palmer's
Hist. of the
Church,
p. iv. c. ix. s. 1.

Alexander, who was then patriarch of Alexandria, and whose orthodox doctrines had been impugned by this declaration, in vain attempted to reclaim Arius from his heresy by private admonition and rebukes. He was the more confirmed in his opinions, and used every effort to propagate them amongst the lower orders, by incorporating them with popular songs and melodies. These circumstances took place about the year A.D. 318.

Mosheim,
b. ii. part 2.
c. v. s. 10.
Socrat. Eecl.
Hist. 1. i.
c. 5, 6.

Failing in his attempts to reclaim Arius, and desirous to enter a public protest against his errors, as well as to put a stop to the progress of a heresy which struck at the very root of Christianity, the patriarch cited him to appear before a

A.D. 321.

LECTURE XIII. synod of nearly one hundred Egyptian and Libyan bishops, convened at Alexandria, where his doctrines were condemned, himself and his followers excommunicated.

Mosheim,
ut supra,
s. 11.

Socrat.

Eccl. Hist.

l. i. c. 6.

Mosheim,

ut supra.

Epiphan.

Hæres. l. ii.

tom. 2. s. 5.

Theodoret.

Hist. Eccl.

l. i. c. 5.

Arius retired into Palestine; he there employed himself in writing letters to some of the most eminent men of the time, amongst whom was Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia (not the historian), who became a convert to his opinions, and absolved him from the Alexandrine excommunication.

Socrat. Hist.

Eccl. l. i.

c. 7.

Eusebius pleaded the cause of Arius not alone with the oriental bishops, but also with the emperor Constantine. The monarch thought but little of the dispute as a religious question, and contented himself with addressing a letter to the contending parties, in which he recommended them to put an end to their differences. But religious dissensions are seldom terminated by advice alone: and so, when Constantine saw that his admonitions were without effect, and that the breach was not only becoming wider, but the spirit of contention spreading even to remote districts of the empire, he determined to put a stop to the dispute and scandal caused by these blasphemies. He convoked a council (the first œcumenical synod) at Nice in Bithynia, where Arius was permitted to plead his cause, and to defend his tenets before an assembly of three hundred and eighteen bishops, gathered from all quarters of Christendom. His doctrines were fully examined, and unequivocally condemned; the sentence of excommunication was renewed; Arius was banished to Illyricum, and his followers were compelled to make their choice between recanting their opinions or sharing his fate.

A.D. 325.

Euseb. de
Vit. Const.

l. iii. c. 7.

Athanas.

Ep. ad.

Episcop.

Africanos,

c. 11. § 3. 11.

It was at this council that the Nicene Creed was drawn up, in express contradiction to the doctrines of Arius; and the solemn sanction of the synod was given to the primitive faith of the Church. Christ was declared to be of the same substance with the Father, that is, of the same real Godhead.

It appears that several creeds were submitted to the consideration of this council, and, at the emperor's recommendation, that of Eusebius Pamphilus, bishop of Cæsarea, was taken as the groundwork of this explanatory Creed. An anathema was attached to it, denouncing those who should say that there was a time when Christ was not, or that before He was begotten He was not, or that He was made of nothing.

Socrat. Hist.

Eccl. l. i. c. 8.

Theodoret,

l. i. c. 12.

To the adoption of this Creed and of the anathema there were but five dissentients; and the avowed reason of their objection was the declaration of Christ's consubstantiality with the Father.

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Socrat. ut
supra.

As the main object of the assembly was to condemn the doctrines of Arius, the Creed, when put forth by this council, stopped short at the simple general confession of belief in the Holy Ghost: nothing more was recited or explained, than was necessary to expose the errors it was intended to confute.

But these subtle adversaries of the faith were not so easily foiled. "Reserving themselves," says Hooker, "unto future opportunities, and knowing that it would not boot them to stir again in a matter so composed, unless they could draw the emperor first, and, by his means, the chiefest bishops unto their part; till Constantine's death, and somewhat after, they always professed love and zeal to the Nicene faith, yet ceased not, in the meanwhile, to strengthen that part which in heart they favoured, and to infest, by all means, their greatest adversaries in this cause." Arius himself professed to believe in the Nicene faith; and Constantine, persuaded by an Arian priest (commended to him with the dying words of his sister) that the persecution of Arius arose more from the malice of his enemies and from party spirit, than from any horror at his blasphemies, or jealousy for the honour of God, recalled him from banishment, repealed the sentence of excommunication, and received into favour his chief advocate, Eusebius of Nicomedia. Thus the Arian party became predominant in the affections and influence of the monarch.

Eccles. Pol.
b. v. c. 42.
s. 2.

A.D. 330.

Mosheim,
ut supra,
s. 13.

The effects of Constantine's espousal of their cause were soon apparent. He demanded the restitution of Arius to communion with the Alexandrian Church. The illustrious Athanasius, who, as a simple deacon of that Church, had been distinguished at the council of Nice for the zeal and talent with which he opposed the Arian heresy, was, at that time, bishop of Alexandria. He was deaf both to entreaty and command, and refused to repeal the sentence of excommunication that had been pronounced by his predecessor. The Arians accused him to the emperor of fomenting divisions, and of other offences. It was in vain that the charges were fully disproved; his ruin was resolved upon, and, at a council

Socrat. ut
supra, c. 27,
et seq.

LECTURE XIII.
A.D. 335. holden at Tyre, he was deposed and banished to Treves, on the Moselle, a city where Constantine had himself a palace, the ruins of which are still visible.

The people of Alexandria appear to have made common cause with their bishop, for they persisted in refusing to admit Arius amongst their presbyters. But the emperor was not thus to be baffled. He invited him to Constantinople, and commanded Alexander, bishop of that city, to admit him to his communion. But, before this order could be put in execution, Arius died in a sudden and fearful manner. According to the account of Socrates, he was taken ill during the procession, near the church that was appointed to be the scene of his triumphs, and died in horrible torments on the same day.

Mosheim, ut supra.

Socrat. ut supra, c. 38.

The troubles of the Church did not cease with the death of her adversary, nor was her inflexible champion Athanasius released immediately thereby from the trials and persecutions that encompassed him.

But whilst brighter days seemed to dawn upon Christendom at the accession of Jovian, when Athanasius was restored to his dignities, a new and dangerous heresy was creeping onwards, which providentially met with a prompt exposure, and as prompt a condemnation.

A.D. 363.

Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 4.

Macedonius, a deposed bishop of Constantinople, taught that the Holy Ghost was a divine energy diffused throughout the universe, and not a person distinct from the Father and the Son. The emperor Theodosius assembled a council of one hundred and fifty bishops at Constantinople, (the second œcumenical synod,) in which the opinions of Macedonius were condemned, and the Nicene Creed enlarged, in order to express the belief of Christians, that the Holy Ghost is truly God. From hence, the Nicene Creed was also called the Constantinopolitan.

A.D. 381.
Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 8.
Sozom. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 7.

Athanas. Epist. ad Episcop. Ep. ad Epictet. 1.

It was thought by as high an authority as that of Athanasius himself, that, when the Nicene Creed was put forth, the canon of faith was so satisfactorily established as to render unnecessary any further statements, either for the confutation of error, or for the establishment of orthodoxy⁵.

⁵ His own words are, ἡ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ (scil. Νικαῖα συνόδῳ), παρὰ τῶν πατέρων, κατὰ τὰς θείας γραφάς, ὁμολογηθεῖσα πίστις αὐτάρκης ἐστὶ πρὸς ἀνατροπὴν μὲν πάσης ἀσεβείας, σύστασιν δὲ τῆς εὐσεβείας ἐν Χριστῷ πίστεως.

But subsequent events proved, that this great man had formed LECTURE XIII.
too favourable an estimate of the religious temper of the times.

The Sabellian, Nestorian, and Eutychian heresies arose; the Arian and Macedonian blasphemies had not quite subsided; and thus, towards the end of the fifth century, about one hundred years after the completion of the Nicene Confession, another creed made its appearance, of a character different in some important respects from all its predecessors.

We have seen that the object of the Apostles' Creed was to *state* the truth, that of the Nicene, to *explain* it. The Athanasian Creed, written at a time when the orthodox faith was attacked, not by one, but by many heretical leaders, came forward to *defend* it. Its exposition of doctrine is, in consequence, more at large; its confutation of heresy more decided; its language more full of solemn, and, if rightly viewed, most scriptural warning.

There have been many disputes respecting the authorship of this Creed, a point which perhaps will never be satisfactorily settled. That it was not the composition of the great divine whose name it bears, is now agreed upon by most theologians, although there was a strong opinion in the ancient Church, that it was written by him during his exile at Treves. This view, which mainly rests on the authority of Gregory Nazianzen, is supported by many learned men, especially Cardinal Bona, Petavius, Bellarmine, Baronius, and by our own Hooker and Comber.

Orat. in
Laud.
Athan.
34, 35.

But the Creed is not to be found in any of his genuine works, although there are many expressions of a similar character, as we may expect from the well-known fact, that a great part of his life was spent in confuting the very heresies that the Creed condemns. It is not alluded to, nor ascribed to him, by any writer who immediately succeeded him; "it was never appealed to as an authority for the decision of the controversy, relating to the procession of the Holy Spirit, between the Eastern and Western Churches, in the seventh and ninth centuries; but as it was never mentioned in those controversies, and further, as it condemns the Nestorian, Photinian, and Eutychian heresies, which did not exist till long after the time of St. Athanasius, who died A.D. 371, it

LECTURE is manifest that the Athanasian Creed was not then in existence, and consequently could not have been composed by the patriarch of Alexandria.”

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Horne on
the Ath.
Creed,
p. 201, 202.

Two other proofs may be added: first, it was the almost universal opinion that the Creed was originally written in Latin, a language in which St. Athanasius did not compose; and secondly, another and a different creed is actually found in his writings⁶. We may conclude, then, that it bears his name only as being compiled from his writings, as adopting his arguments, and exhibiting his views⁷. This Creed comes down to us, recommended not more by the voice of the Church, than by its own intrinsic worth; a worth the more remarkable when it is remembered, that although of private, and, as far as we can gather, of individual authority, very few years elapsed after its first appearance, before it was received in the Western Church, as the best defensive statement of the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity. It was called by Luther “the bulwark of the Apostles’ Creed.” “Calvin, Beza, and all the wisest and best Reformers acknowledged it, and made it their profession of faith; the Puritans in our own country, the parent stock of all our modern dissenters, embraced it as readily as the Church of England herself; and if many of these reject it now, despise, condemn, and deride it, they are neither *true* Calvinists nor Presbyterians, but shelter themselves under the general name of Independents, among whom

Nares on the
Creeds, p. 86.
Palmer’s
Ch. of Christ.
vol. i. p. 1.
c. 5. s. 2.
Baxter’s
Reasons of
the Christ.
Relig.
part ii. c. 10.
s. 6.

⁶ It is prefixed to the Benedictine edition of his works; and has been inserted by Dr. Routh, at the end of his “*Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Opuscula*.”

⁷ It may not be uninteresting to add the names of the several writers to whom it has been at different times attributed. Quesnel ascribes it to Vigilius, bishop of Thapsus in Africa, who may have written it towards the end of the fifth century, or later.

Joseph Antelmy gives it to Vincentius of Lerins, a celebrated monk who flourished in Gaul about the middle of the fifth century; Muratori, to Venantius Fortunatus, a French pope of the sixth century; and lastly, Waterland, whose opinion is now generally adopted, assigns it to Hilary, bishop of Arles in France, about the middle of the fifth century.

It was received into the offices of the Gallican Church, about A.D. 670; approved in Spain, about the year 633, in Germany A.D. 787, in Britain A.D. 800, in Rome A.D. 930.

See Horne on the Athanasian Creed, Waterland’s Critical History, Riddle’s Christian Antiquities, and Bingham’s Eccl. Antiquities (art. Athanas. Creed).

it is said at present that every man's private opinion is his Church." LECTURE
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"As to the matter of it," says Dean Comber, "it doth very fully and particularly condemn all the heresies that were of old, in the time of this great bulwark of the Catholic faith; forbidding us to 'confound the persons' of the Trinity, with Sabellius; or to 'divide the substance,' with Arius and Eunomius. It shews us, against Arius and Macedonius, that both the 'Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.' It confesses Christ to be 'God, of the substance of His Father,' against Samosatenus and Photinus; and 'Man of the substance of His mother,' against Apollinaris. Yet He is not, as Nestorius dreamed, 'two,' but 'one Christ;' 'not by confusion of Substance,' as Eutyches held, 'but by unity of person.' So that this creed is the quintessence of ancient orthodox divinity, and the means to extirpate all those accursed heresies, some of which our age hath seen revived, and therefore we have more need to hold and repeat this useful creed."

Dean Vincent's Sermon.

Comber, condensed in Mant's Prayer Book. Van Mildert's Bampton Lect. viii. p. 230.

As so many objections have been raised against the retention of this creed in our Liturgy, objections which have not proceeded from the ignorant alone, but are found in the writings of eminent divines; and as the creed is rejected by the American branch of the Church, it may not be amiss briefly to ascertain how far these objections are founded in fact, or in a right understanding of the (so-called) "damnatory clauses."

The sum of the objection is this; that the Church of England is uncharitable, in requiring her members to receive the Athanasian Creed upon pain of damnation, and presumptuous, in declaring of those who reject it, that, "without doubt they shall perish everlastingly."

This objection proceeds upon a wrong understanding of the meaning that our Church attaches to the clauses in question. Although, by her adoption of the Athanasian creed, she implies her belief, (together with the whole Western Church,) that it contains the best existing defence of the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, she does not take upon herself to assert, that all will perish everlastingly, who dissent from this statement of the doctrine. In other words, she

LECTURE ^{XIII.} does not mean to say, that all will be damned who will not, or cannot receive the Athanasian line of argument. This would be indeed arrogating to herself the judge's office, and taking up an authority which belongs to God alone. The enemies of the Church of England assert, that she does assume this authority; the Church herself disclaims it; and surely she best knows her own meaning and intentions. Let her speak for herself;—"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

Art. VI.

Surely, this general disclaimer of her right to place human tradition side by side with Scripture, or to enforce her own opinions, upon peril of damnation, is sufficient to mark the particular sense in which she understands the clauses alluded to. It is the *doctrine* then, not the *language* of the creed that she enforces,—the doctrine that she considers essential to salvation^a. If here she is in error, if she is mistaken in supposing that a wilful rejection of Catholic truth places a man out of the way of salvation, she shares this error with the Apostles, with the whole Primitive Church, with the reformers both at home and abroad, with every *true* Christian of every age and every country: nay, with reverence be it spoken, she speaks the language and echoes the judgment of Christ Himself; "he that believeth not," said the Saviour, "shall be damned." This declaration, (and none can be more explicit,) was made when He gave His commission to His disciples to "preach the Gospel to every creature," and to "baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." To a belief in what, then, can we suppose our Saviour to have alluded? Surely to a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, which He had but that moment put forth, and urged upon His disciples as the fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith.

2 John 7. 9.
Rev. ii. 15.
Titus iii. 10.
Gal. i. 8, 9.
2 Pet. ii. 1.
Ignat. ad
Eph. 16.
Tertull. de
Præsc. adv.
Hæc. c. 37.
Jewell, Ap.
p. 18.
Pearson on
the Creed,
Art. IX.
Confess.
Helvet. c. 1.
sect. 11, &c.
Palmer on
the Ch. of
Christ, p. i.
c. 5. sect. 2.

Compare
Mark xvi.
16. Matt.
xxviii. 19.

^a It is well known that, in the last attempt made by authority for the revision of the Liturgy, A.D. 1689, the commissioners recommended the insertion of a rubric before the Athanasian creed, "declaring the curses denounced therein not to be restrained to every particular article, but intended against those that deny the substance of the Christian religion in general."—Cardwell's *Conferences*, ch. x. p. 431.

In saying, then, that those who deny this leading doctrine of the Gospel cannot be saved *through the Gospel*, the creed says no more than did our Saviour; and surely we must pause, before we presume to look upon His declarations as uncharitable. With the opinions of those who are not Christians, we have nothing to do. They cannot be admitted as evidence in a cause which goes directly to confute them by the arguments, and to condemn them by the voice of Scripture. But there is something inexpressibly painful in witnessing the anxiety with which many, even within the pale of the Church, will endeavour hastily, and without examination, to find fault with those portions of her liturgy which declare, more decidedly than others, the great Scriptural truth, "without faith it is impossible to please God."

LECTURE XIII.
Heb. xi. 6.

It should be remembered, that these warnings, of the possibility of being excluded from the kingdom of heaven, are not limited to mere matters of faith. What language can be more decided than that of St. Paul, when, after having enumerated the works of the flesh, he says, "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" Now, if we had received from the Primitive Church a creed of *practical* as well as of *doctrinal* faith, founded upon this passage of Scripture, if this creed explained at some length the sins condemned there by the Apostle, and concluded with the declaration, "they which do these things shall without doubt perish everlastingly," there would not perhaps be wanting some, who would condemn the creed as uncharitable, dogmatical, and so forth, although it spoke nothing more than the plain mind of Scripture; and they would perhaps say, that every Church, which retained such a creed, pronounced an unscriptural and presumptuous sentence of damnation against those, who would not receive its expositions. It would be convenient to forget, that the declaration referred to the anathema of the Apostle, and rested exclusively on his authority. It would be convenient for him, whose want of personal holiness was condemned by this *supposed practical* creed, to deny its truth, and to brand it as uncharitable: it would be equally convenient for him, whose want of faith is condemned by the *real doctrinal* creed,

Gal. v. 21.

LECTURE XIII. which rests on the authority of Christ, to deny its truth as well, and to pronounce that too uncharitable.

Waterland
on the Ath.
Creed,
p. 314.

But, in the words of one of the great lights of the English Church, "as long as there shall be any men left to *oppose* the *doctrines* which this creed contains, so long will it be *expedient* and even *necessary* to continue the *use* of it, in order to preserve the rest: and I suppose, when we have none remaining to find fault with the *doctrines*, there will be none to object against the *use* of the creed, or so much as to wish to have it laid aside."

Another vague charge against it remains to be noticed. It has been said that it is "unintelligible." Let us rightly understand this objection. If it is meant by this to say, that the doctrine of the Trinity as laid down in it is unintelligible, the position is *true*, the objection *groundless*; for who shall say, that he can understand *how* three persons exist in one God;—co-equal, co-eternal? these are mysteries which are confessedly beyond the grasp of human reason.

Rom. xi. 33.

See
Horbery,
Serm. xviii.
p. 436.

As long as we are in the flesh, the full understanding of these things is hidden from us, doubtless in God's mercy as well as in His wisdom. "Unsearchable" indeed "are His judgments, and his ways past finding out." That the doctrine, then, is unintelligible, is surely no reasonable objection against the creed; and were you to remove it from the Liturgy, that doctrine would remain as great a mystery as before. No words that man could use would make it otherwise.

But if this objection is, that the *language* of the creed is difficult to understand, it is one which a very little patient study would soon clear away: and if the objection is *honest*, the study will be entered upon.

The word "incomprehensible" has been a stumbling-block to many, who think it hard that they should be expected to believe a creed, one of whose clauses is by its own admission "incomprehensible." The anxious enquirer after truth would seek the real meaning of this expression, before he condemned the creed for a single word. He would find its proper interpretation to be, "not comprehended within any limits, not confined to any space;" and such was one meaning of the

word, when the translation from the original Latin “immensus” was made into our own language.

Again, it may seem somewhat harsh, that no apparent allowance is made in the creed for different capacities and measures of information, but that the learned and the unlearned are put upon the same footing, “if thou believest not, without doubt thou shalt perish everlastingly.” “These clauses,” says Bishop Tomline, “cannot be considered as applicable to any persons, except those who shall have had full means of instruction in the doctrines to which they relate, and who shall have finally rejected them. It is utterly repugnant to the attributes of God, nor can it be reconciled to our ideas of common justice, that a person should be consigned to eternal punishment, because he did not believe certain articles of Faith which were never proposed to him, or of the truth of which he was not,” from education, from infirmity, or from insurmountable obstacles, “qualified to judge. . . . But as we may say, that if any man perseveres in the deliberate commission of known sin, he has no right to expect salvation,—so we may say, that if a man, through obstinacy and prejudice, from a wilful misapplication, or neglect of the talents with which he is endowed, finally rejects the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, when they are fairly and fully proposed to him, he likewise has no right to expect salvation; in either case, he must be left to the uncovenanted mercy of God.”

LECTURE
XIII.

Nares on
the Creed,
p. 92.

Tomline on
Art. VIII.
p. 223.

The most charitable Christian, then, may use this creed as a Scriptural confession of his own faith in the blessed Trinity; in the assurance, that to him there is no sentence held forth, no threat pronounced, no condemnation implied. And, surely, the Church may use it as a solemn warning, “proved by most certain warrant of Holy Writ,” to the infidel who denies his Saviour, and to the false brother who dishonours Him. To these no warning can be too stirring, no language too decided. And, surely, it is no lack of charity, to place before them the awful denunciations of Scripture against impenitence and unbelief.

God forbid, that we should feel a delicacy in advising men of the danger of relying for salvation upon what they *do*, without any reference to what they *believe*. It would be

LECTURE
XIII. } indeed a want of charity towards men's souls, were false fears
or falser scruples so to make us tamper with the truth, that
God may have to say of us, as He did of those who would
not in times past listen to the prophet's voice, because his
tones were somewhat harsh, full of warning, full of reproof,—
“a wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land ;
the prophets prophesy falsely ; and the priests bear rule by
their means ; and my people love to have it so : and what
Jer.v. 30, 31. will ye do in the end thereof?”

LECTURE XIV.

2 CHRON. xx. 20.

“Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established.”

It seems to be an instinct inseparable from the very nature of man, to believe that there is an unseen Being, who is the arbiter of his individual destiny, and the disposer of all human events. Go where you will, search where you please, in every quarter both of the old world and of the new, you will find, more or less, the feeling that there is a God ^{LECTURE XIV.}¹.

It is true that the notions of the divine nature, as entertained by the most polished nations of antiquity, were of a singularly degraded character. However exalted might have been the conceptions of a gifted few, whose minds soared above the childish legends of their mythology, the mass of the people could look to their deities as holding out a sanction for every crime that can disgrace humanity.

Did the sensualist, the drunkard, the adulterer, the trickster, the thief, or even the murderer, require a plea for the commission of his iniquity,—it was at hand: his mythology could furnish him with instances enough; and he could plead, if not the authority, at least the example, of some one of his divinities in his defence.

True also is it, that there were those who derided all notion of a God; who deemed this world and all its created wonders the mere offspring of chance: whilst others dreamt of a God too far removed above us to heed our lives, our deaths, our virtues, or our iniquities. They looked upon the Deity as an indolent spectator of human affairs, as one who, though the

¹ Παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις πρῶτον νομίζεται τοὺς θεοὺς σίβειν.—Xenoph. Mem. iv. 4, 19.

LECTURE XIV. Creator of all living things, yet left to other powers the management of his own work, as a care unworthy of His greatness.

But these were exceptions, and serve to prove the vanity of all human intellect, when it endeavours to investigate the nature of Him who, except by his own revelation, will ever be the "unknown God."

Degraded as were the pagan's conceptions of the Godhead, little as was the comfort that he could derive from a system of religious observances founded upon fear, to the utter exclusion of love, still there was a belief in something; and this belief was the public and universal reason of the world.

"No age so distant," says Bishop Pearson, "no country so remote, no people so barbarous, but gives a sufficient testimony of this truth. When the Roman eagle flew over most parts of the habitable world, they met with atheism no where, but rather, by their miscellany deities at Rome, which grew together with their victories, they shewed no nation was without its God. And since the later art of navigation improved hath discovered another part of the world, with which no former commerce hath been known, although the customs of the people be much different, and their manner of religion hold small correspondency with any in these parts of the world professed, yet in this all agree, that some religious observances they retain, and a Divinity they acknowledge. Or, if any nation be discovered which maketh no profession of piety, and exerciseth no religious observances, it followeth not from thence that they acknowledge no God: for they may only deny His providence, as the Epicureans did; or, if any go farther, their numbers are so few, that they must be inconsiderable in respect of mankind."

Pearson on
the Creed,
vol. i. p. 39.
Burton's Ed.

Belief, then, in the existence of a God is twofold, natural and revealed. A natural belief appears to have its origin, not only in that instinctive principle of fear, which seems alike to have animated the votary of Jupiter, the devotee of Veshnoo, the follower of Mohammed, or the worshipper of the Triune Jehovah, but it may be traced also to the contemplation of those wonderful works of creation, in which the name of the Almighty is written in characters so legible, that the veriest child can read them.

If we look to the heavens, even the natural mind can bring itself to confess, that they “declare the glory of God,” and “the firmament sheweth His handy-work.” The sure rules of science will display to us the fixed order of the heavenly bodies, can assign their properties, calculate their distances, foretell their setting and uprising. They can shew also, that, besides those stars which we see, there are others, without number, undiscernible by the naked eye, yet each of them, by the same process of calculation, proved to be many times larger than the whole body of the earth. Hence, too, we find that all these stars, together with ourselves, receive light and heat from the master luminary, the sun: whilst reason and experience assure us, that, without that sun, this our planet the earth would be desolate and barren; a dark, dead lump of clay.

LECTURE
XIV.
Ps. xix. 1.

But science will establish something more than these mere facts: it will prove, that the position which we hold, in relation to the sun, is so nicely proportioned to the wants of the animal and the vegetable world, that any alteration in it would, as far as we can judge, mar the best purposes of creation. Remove this earth, and place it in the position of another planet, of Mercury for example; astronomers will tell you, that it could not exist in its new situation unless it were substantially altered. There the whole ocean would even boil with extremity of heat, and become all steam and vapour; there all plants and animals would be consumed in that fiery furnace. Carry us further off to the position of Saturn: there the whole globe would be one mass of ice; the deepest seas there frozen to the bottom; no life, no vegetation, all one chill, ice-bound heap.

See Bentley's Boyle
Lect. s. viii.

Look, again, to the wonderful structure of our own body: the delicate organization of its several parts; their perfect adaptation to their respective wants and functions; the admirable proportion and arrangement of the whole. It is here, in his body, that even the natural mind of man can recognize the great Power who presided at its formation; for, though the unbeliever may endeavour to explain these and other mysteries, by ascribing their origin to the undefined power which he calls chance, there is a voice within ourselves that gives a firm denial to the suggestion, and tells us that, though

LECTURE
XIV.

chance may, for argument's sake, have made one such being as man, it cannot be by accident that so many millions for so many ages have been fashioned alike : members, functions, powers, all the same ; and the only important difference, discernible between them, arising out of that benevolent Providence, who has adapted the structure, and the habits of men, to their several wants in their respective climates.

The manifestly providential arrangements, then, of the works of creation ; the nice position of this our planet ; the sun that is our guide and nourisher by day ; the moon that lights our path by night ; the regular recurrence of the seasons, years, months, days, hours, minutes, travelling on for thousands of years in their unbroken course, without alteration or derangement ; the ocean that must submit to the decree, " thus far, and no farther shalt thou go ;" the tides that have their appointed ebb and flow ; the rain that fertilizes the earth and her productions ; the tempest that clears the overcharged atmosphere ; the anatomical structure of our own bodies ; the properties and effects of plants, minerals, and metals ; the wonders of the animal kingdom ; the creatures of earth, and air, and ocean,—their habits, their instinct, their utility ; the subjection of matter to mind, as evidenced in the submission of some of the mightiest amongst them to man, whose physical powers are so inferior to their own ; these—and they are not the thousandth part of the wonders that surround us,—these all tell so loudly of the existence of a God, that unbelief becomes not only a proof of a hardened heart, but of an understanding wilfully perverted, and even judicially blind. " Well may we read," says Bishop Pearson, " the great Artificer of the world in the works of His own hands, and by the existence of *any thing* demonstrate the First Cause of all things." God's mysterious wisdom may be seen by him, who desires to learn, in the dissection of the minutest insect.

Pearson on
the Creed,
p. 36.

But He has not left His creatures to glean their knowledge of Him from a contemplation of His works alone : He has *revealed* Himself to us ; and, in that revelation, has made known His nature, His attributes, His designs, His will, as far as our finite capacities can understand them ; and, if more be not revealed, our heavenly Father's other merciful dispen-

sations towards us are sufficient to assure His believing children, that the very withholding a greater measure of information is in mercy too. LECTURE
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If we open that holy volume, which is the record of this revelation, we shall find that the first point impressed upon us is the oneness or unity of the Godhead. Let us select two instances from each covenant. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." Such was the declaration that Moses was commissioned to make to His chosen people. And, in like manner, Isaiah says, "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and His redeemer the Lord of Hosts; I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God." Our Saviour bore equal testimony to the unity of the Godhead, and quoted the very words of Moses, above given, in answer to the Scribe who asked Him, "which is the first and great commandment?" St. Paul, too, inculcated the self-same doctrine in his Epistle to the Corinthians, "there is none other God but one."

Deut. vi. 4.

Is. xlv. 6.

Mark xii. 29.

1 Cor. viii. 4.

But, careful as are the writers both of the Old and New Testament to put forth the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead, an attentive reader of Scripture will not fail to remark, that, when so speaking, they frequently allude to three distinct Beings, each performing separate functions, and yet, each joined to each in terms of perfect equality, so as to make one mysterious whole. To each we find the titles of the Godhead applied; to each are ascribed the attributes, actions, and power of Divinity; "none is afore or after other; none is greater or less than another." And this belief in the three-fold nature of the Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, is called the doctrine of the Trinity; a word, which, though not found in the language of Scripture, is yet sufficiently expressive of the meaning of its doctrine².

Athan.
Creed.

The detailed proof of this will belong to another portion of the creed: for the present purpose it will be sufficient to take a general view of the subject.

² Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, who died A.D. 181, "appears to be the first writer who used the word 'Trinity' to express the Scriptural doctrine concerning a distinction of persons in the one Eternal Godhead."—Riddle's Christian Antiq. b. i. c. 10. p. 29.

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XIV.

It will be at once conceded, that it was a paramount object with Moses to inculcate the unity of the Godhead upon his countrymen, a people singularly addicted to polytheism, as their history abundantly shews, and who had, for many generations during their sojourning in Egypt, been accustomed to witness the grossest superstitions, and the foulest idolatry, on the part of their heathen taskmasters.

See Hey's
Div. Lect.
iv. s. 2.

Now it is most remarkable, that Moses, writing with this object in view, should make use of such expressions, and such a structure of sentences, as to imply that in this Unity there was a plurality. The fact, that in the first chapter of Genesis, the word God, in the plural, is joined with the verb **CREATED**, in the singular, above thirty times, is known to every Biblical scholar; a fact perfectly unaccountable, except upon the supposition that Moses was commanded of God so to speak. In like manner we find the constant union of two words, expressive of the Godhead, "**Jehovah Elohim:**" the former, in the singular, implying the unity of the essence; the latter, in the plural, indicating a plurality in that unity.

A still more striking instance has been remarked in the twenty-sixth verse of the first chapter of Genesis, where "**God said**" (the plural here joined with the singular), "**Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.**" With whom was this mysterious converse held? Not with angels; for, though they are ministers of His will, no where are they spoken of as being co-agents with the Almighty in the work of creation. We cannot suppose that they, created beings as they were, would have been addressed by God in the terms of equality indicated in the language of Scripture, still less can we admit that unscholarlike, nay, impious explanation of the modern Jews, that it was only a figurative expression, indicative of the high dignity of the speaker, who thus used the style and phraseology of the sovereigns and potentates of the earth. We can come but to one conclusion. The Unity conferred with the Trinity; Jehovah with Elohim; God the Father, who "in the beginning created the heaven and the earth," held counsel with God the Word, who said, "Let there be light, and there was light:" with God the Spirit, who "moved on the face of the waters." The succeeding verse is a commentary upon its predecessor. "So," after this

See Tertull.
adv. Prax.
c. 12.

resolve of the Godhead, the Trinity, "Elohim" (for thus it is in the original), "created man in His own image; in the image of God (Elohim) created He him³."

LECTURE
XIV.

August.
Confess.
l. xiii. s. 32.

But there are other passages in Scripture, which are applied to God the Father, to God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. In the memorable vision of Isaiah, recorded in the sixth chapter, the prophet is evidently speaking of the glory of God. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne: and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." This vision is alluded to by St. John when he speaks of the hardness of heart of the Jews, with regard to our Saviour, and of their blindness to His claim to the character of the Messiah; "These things said Esaias, when he saw *His* glory, and spake of *Him*." "St. Paul, citing the same passage in his address to the Jews at Rome, says, 'Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers;' identifying the Lord of Hosts with the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, in the same manner as St. John had identified Him with the second Person. Thus each inspired commentator respectively ascribes, to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, the most exalted expressions of absolute divinity that are to be found in the sacred writings⁴."

Is. vi. 1—3.

John xii. 41.

Acts xxviii.
25.

Van Mil-
dert's Serm.
vol. i. p. 469.

Again, a decided testimony to the truth of this doctrine may be found, in the terms of the commission given by Christ to His disciples. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." We cannot suppose that He, who said, "learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," would thus have placed Himself upon a level with God His Father, had He not felt His perfect right to do so. But He

Cyril.
Catech.
lect. xvi.
s. 4.
Chrys.
Hom. xx. in
1 Cor. s. 7.
Matt. xxviii.
19.
Tomline's
Theol.
vol. ii. p. 85.
Matt. xi. 29.

³ See the whole argument at length in Bishop Tomline's treatise on the first Article; and consult Horsley's Biblical Criticism, vol. i. c. iii. Gen.

⁴ Bishop Tomline brings forward, on the authority of Galatine, two expositions of this passage in Isaiah, which are remarkable proofs of the belief of the ancient Jews in the doctrine of the Trinity. The one is taken from the illustrious Rabbi Simeon, who thus comments upon the word HOLY being repeated three times:—"Holy, this is the Father; Holy, this is the Son; Holy, this is the Holy Spirit." The other is from the Chaldee paraphrase of Jonathan, the son of Uzziel; "Holy, Father; Holy, Son; Holy, Holy Ghost."—Tomline's Theol. vol. ii. p. 83.—Chrys. Hom. xx. in 1 Cor. s. 7.

LECTURE "thought it not robbery to be *equal with God*," and therefore
 XIV. He claimed His privilege. St. Paul, too, gives no hint of
 Phil. ii. 6. any inequality of power between the sacred Three, in whose
 name he blesses the Corinthian Church; "The grace of the
 Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion
 of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

2 Cor. xiii.
14.

But clearly as this doctrine runs, like a golden thread, throughout the whole web of Scripture language, there are those who, will not only deny that such is the fair interpretation of the word of God, but will assert that the doctrine is even later than Christianity itself: that it was imperceptibly introduced by the converted heathens, who, to serve their own purposes, were anxious to engraft the speculations of Plato upon the truths of the Gospel, to make it more difficult of understanding; and, like the lawyers in the days of Christ, to take away the key of knowledge, and to hinder them that were desirous to enter into God's kingdom. They will affirm, that the primitive Fathers held no such views, and that the doctrine of the Trinity was almost unheard of, until the council of Nice established it as a point of faith.

Luke xi. 52.

With regard to the first objection, the construction of the original Hebrew before mentioned, implying a Trinity in Unity, is not a question of *opinion*, but a matter of *fact*; a question of ordinary scholarship,—of knowledge: the words speak for themselves; they cannot be perverted from their simple meaning by any recognized rules of honest interpretation; and the passages are too numerous, to admit of the possibility of their having being wilfully interpolated, or even admitted by mistake. Before the coming of Christ the Jews, we know, did not attempt to explain them away.

See Beveridge on the Articles, vol. i. p. 87.

The fact also is indisputable, "that notions somewhat resembling the mystery of the Trinity prevailed throughout Asia, Greece, and Rome; and that the theology even of the Hindoos, Persians, and Egyptians supplies much interesting evidence to the same effect. The primary source of these opinions can hardly be doubted. It is acknowledged by some of their most distinguished writers, that theirs was, in many respects, a theology of divine tradition, not of their own invention. Whence then could it be, but directly from the Hebrews, or from other nations through them, or from

still earlier communications transmitted, through various unknown channels, from the patriarchs themselves, and spread by their descendants through countries the most remote? This alone, perhaps, can satisfactorily account for both the similarity and dissimilarity between the heathen notions on this subject and the pure doctrine of revelation. The similarity attests their origin; the dissimilarity their corruption.”

LECTURE
XIV.
Van Mil-
dert's Sermon.
23, vol. i.
p. 475.

The dispersion of the prophecies of Balaam throughout the Gentile nations, and the traditions which doubtless were handed down by the descendants of Abraham's children by Keturah, will account for the existence of these glimmerings of a holier light; glimmerings, which would naturally become fainter and fainter, until at last nothing remained, but the bare existence of a vague traditionary notion of three separate principles in the unseen God.

With regard to the assertion, that the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity was unknown, or at least unacknowledged, by the Church during the first three centuries, it would be difficult to say, whether there was more of ignorance of the writings of that period, or of positive falsehood in the declaration.

Lindsey, in his “Apology,” says, “The fathers of the first three centuries, and consequently all Christian people, for upwards of three hundred years after Christ, till the council of Nice, were generally Unitarians, what is now called Arians, or Socinians.” Belsham asserts, “that the great body of the Primitive Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, for the first two centuries and upwards, were Unitarians, and believers in the simple humanity of Jesus Christ.”

Lindsey's
Apology,
p. 24.

Belsham's
Calm En-
quiry, p. 255.

The slightest acquaintance with the ecclesiastical history of the period will suffice, to convince the most sceptical, that the advocates of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity were *never*, during the time alluded to, even spoken of as heretics or blasphemers; whilst the impugnors of that doctrine were condemned by the voice of the Church from time to time, until at length a solemn protest was recorded against them by the council of Nice.

But there is another proof, derivable from the Fathers themselves; and Dr. Burton has shewn, by numberless quotations from the writings of *all* the Fathers who lived before the council of Nice, from Barnabas to Lactantius inclusive,

LECTURE
XIV.

See Burton's
Testimonies
of the Ante-
Nicene Fa-
thers to the
Divinity of
Christ.

that, to a man, they maintained and preached the self-same doctrine that the true Christian holds at the present hour,—namely, that Jesus Christ is “God, of the substance of His Father, born before the worlds; and man, of the substance of His mother, born in the world.”

But, established as this doctrine is by what God has been pleased to reveal to us of Himself, we are told by some, that it is a hard thing to be required to receive it as a fundamental point of faith, when it is confessedly a mystery of such an abstruse character, that the most powerful understandings have been baffled, in the attempt to comprehend it fully, or to explain it clearly: “and it has been said, that where mystery begins, religion ends. No sophism can be more destitute of foundation. Religion begins with mystery; nor is it possible that mystery should be excluded from it. The divine nature is, and cannot but be, to us a mystery. Our own nature, compounded as it is of spiritual and corporeal faculties, is also a mystery. The whole course of nature is a mystery; so is the divine government of the world, baffling continually the profoundest calculations of human wisdom. Shall we then wonder, if the mode of being, peculiar to the ‘God invisible and immortal,’ be beyond the grasp of our apprehension? Shall we expect, that, while we are in this earthly tabernacle, such a subject may be brought down to the level of our capacities? and that, though in almost every thing else we ‘see through a glass darkly,’ we should be permitted to see ‘face to face’ the glories of the Almighty, and to ‘know Him, even as we are known?’ Surely, this is to forget the distance between things finite and infinite, between heaven and earth, between matter and spirit, between things temporal and things eternal.”

1 Cor. xiii.
12.

Van Mil-
dert's Serm.
vol. i. xxiii.
p. 479.

I must remember, then, that if I admit the existence of an essential difference, and an immeasurable distance between the human and divine capacities, I must not pause to believe God, when He tells me that this or that, connected with Himself, is *fact*, merely because I cannot understand *how* it is a fact. If I am to defer the hour of my belief in what He has revealed of Himself, until I shall have arrived, step by step, at an accurate proof of each particular position,—if thus I argue with respect to that which is unseen, demanding

demonstration before I will believe, how am I to act with LECTURE
XIV.
reference to those things which I *do* see, and yet cannot so thoroughly explain or comprehend, as to set at rest all debate upon the subject? To be consistent, I must doubt the evidence of my senses every hour of my life. To take some few examples out of thousands that might be adduced, I must refuse to believe in the growth of trees and plants, because, though I see their increase from month to month, or week to week, I cannot actually *see them grow*, nor thoroughly understand the peculiar process of their nurture. I must disbelieve that the sea is salt, because I cannot explain the reason of its being so. I must say, "there are no tides," because I cannot prove what is the power that regulates them. I must question the laws of gravity, because I only know them to be matters of fact, without being able to explain the cause.

But there are other mysteries, unconnected with the material world, even more difficult to explain; mysteries, the existence of which none but the hardened infidel will doubt, yet which the wisest of the sons of men cannot adequately explain. There is,—if we may so say, without suspicion of handling these awful topics with too little reverence,—there is in our own persons a sort of Trinity, the soul, the mind, the body; each invested with its separate functions, its peculiar offices, its individual privileges; each, in one point of view, independent of the other, and again bound together by the tie of mutual dependence; separable in the abstract, united in reality; co-operating in action; indissolubly joined, till separated by death; with a sure promise of a future and a permanent reunion.

If experience tells us, that these mysteries take place in the person of the creature, and he the while able only to realize the fact, not to comprehend the method,—is faith to stumble, and to refuse to assent to the possibility of similar mysteries, though in a far higher degree, existing in the substance of the Creator? If He has embodied three distinct natures in ourselves, can He not be self-invested with a threefold nature too? We *know* that God *has* so revealed Himself; we must *believe*, then, in the truth, the wisdom, the necessity of that revelation.

LECTURE
XIV.

Nor is this childlike faith any impeachment of our understandings. With regard to unseen spiritual things, we are much in the same situation as the blind are with reference to earthly things. "To a man born blind, every thing to him invisible is a mystery. But does he act contrary to reason, in trusting to the testimony of others respecting objects which he cannot himself discern? Though unable to walk 'by sight,'
 2 Cor. v. 7. may he not walk 'by faith?' And why may not we do the same with respect to things indiscernible or incomprehensible by our natural faculties? Faith in God is our proper guide in the one case, as faith in man is in the other. In both, though the subject be hidden from our view, enough may be known to certify every reasonable enquirer of its reality, and its truth."

Van Mildert, ut
supra, p. 480.

It is surely not without its meaning that, in so many of God's dealings with mankind, He has been pleased to develop Himself in a threefold character. The attentive reader of the Scriptures will discover that, in many of the most striking manifestations of Divine power, the design appears to originate in the intelligence of the Father, whilst the executive department (if we may so term it) of that mind seems to be conducted by the several acts of the Word and of the Spirit.

We have seen, in the account of the creation, the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity clearly shadowed out: God the Father resolving upon the creation; God the Son giving the command for the accomplishment of the Divine will; God the Holy Ghost carrying the design into execution. So, too, with our redemption: we find it conceived, begun, and ended in Jehovah; but still in His mysterious threefold character. We look upon the merciful Father foreseeing, from before the foundation of the world, the necessity of our redemption. In the fulness of God's own time, we recognize the mission of God the Son, who came to accomplish that great work, by offering Himself up as a sacrifice to God for us. And we can see the instrumentality of God the Spirit, in the early ages of Christianity, advocating the counsel of God by miracle and portent; and still infusing into our hearts that most excellent gift of spiritual wisdom, by which we are enabled to feel our need of His mercy, to apply for it

in faith, to use it as we ought. And thus we have, in this one LECTURE
XIV.
dispensation of Jehovah, mercy conceived, mercy carried
into effect generally, mercy applied individually.

Take, again, any attribute of the Godhead,—wisdom for example,—and we can trace in it the distinct operations of the three Persons of the Trinity. When we contemplate wisdom as seated in the Divine mind, we look upon it as reposed in the supremacy of God the Father: when we hear the revelations of this wisdom uttered to the world, and speaking the words of life and truth to men, we recognize the instrumentality of the incarnate Word, God the Son: when we contemplate the influence of that same wisdom, animating and impregnating the hearts of the Apostles, or counselling the disciple of to-day with the “still small voice” of His inworking grace, we recognize the sanctifying presence of the Spirit, God the Holy Ghost. Are either of these three several and distinct wisdoms, wisdom conceived, wisdom expressed, wisdom acting, inferior one to another? or, as our Athanasian Creed terms it, are “either afore or after other,” either “greater or less than another?”

But whilst we confess it to be our duty to believe, rather than to explain; to receive this and every other Divine mystery as babes in Christ; not to speculate upon it, as though it might be a matter of controversy; God has been too merciful to our weakness to task even our *faith* too hardly. The doctrine of the Trinity is not placed before us as a mere speculative truth; its practical importance is manifest.

Rob me of my belief, that the Christ who died for my sins is God as well as man, and how can I be sure that His death is indeed “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world?” How can I pray to Him without blasphemy as my intercessor, who, if He be not God, is none other than a dead man, and so invested with no more power than Moses, or Elias, or Paul, or any other of the Prophets and Apostles?

Deprive me of my faith in the Godhead of the Spirit, and how can I speak of Him as my Comforter, pray to Him as my Sanctifier, implore Him to make my worthless body His abiding tabernacle? My body cannot be the “Temple of the Holy Ghost,” if He be not God to enshrine Himself

LECTURE therein. And, if my prayers are misdirected, and I know
 XIV. not what to pray for as I ought, I am poor indeed in comfort, if I am forbidden to believe, that it is *God* the Holy Ghost, who, “maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

Rom. viii.
26.

Deny then the Godhead of the Son, you must deny as well the Godhead of the Spirit; and you must reject withal His individual visitation. Let that worm of infidelity enter into the gourd of comfort which God has raised, “that it might be a shadow over my head, to deliver me from my grief;”—my gourd is withered,—and, I may say with Jonah, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

Jonah iv.
6—8.

LECTURE XV.

2 COR. i. 3.

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

THE declaration of belief in the Unity of the Godhead, which is implied in the Apostles', and clearly expressed in the Nicene Creed, was rendered needful, not so much as a corrective of heathen ignorance, as a protest against semi-Christian heresy. LECTURE
XV.

In a doctrinal point of view, the heathens were not the worst enemies of the Gospel faith. There was more danger to be apprehended from those professedly within the pale of the Church, who sought to engraft the fantasies of philosophy upon the truths of revelation. And hence we find the primitive Fathers, aware of the danger from this quarter, bearing testimony against each heresy as it arose; determined, not alone to hold fast the “faith once delivered unto the saints,” but to make “the form of sound words” so clear and explicit, that no mistake might arise, as to what were the real landmarks of the Christian faith. Jude 3.
2 Tim. i. 13.

Thus the Creed commences with implying a belief in God's Unity; for Marcion, one of the earliest heretics, unable to account for the origin of evil, perceiving its power, and yet unwilling to ascribe it to the Author of good, taught, “that there are two co-eternal independent beings, the one a good God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Author of the Gospel, and the fountain, source, and origin of all good; the other an evil god, the creator of the world, the giver of the law, and the cause, root, and author of all evil:” a doctrine, traceable (if Theodoret be correct) to the teaching of Simon Magus, and certainly, with modifications, more widely spread in the third century by the Persian Manes, or Mani- Tertull. adv.
Marc. l. i.
c. 6. p. 129.
Iren. l. iii.
c. 12. ib.
c. 25. § 2, 3.
Cyril. Cat.
Lec. iv. 4.

King on the
Creed, pt. ii.
p. 66.
Theod.
Hær. i. 24.

LECTURE **chæus**¹. Others again, with Megethius, held that there
 XV. were three principles,—one, the good God, the Father of
 Christ, another the Demiurge, or the creator of the world,
 and the third, the evil one. It will probably suffice to bring
 Orig. Dial. i. forward these proofs of existing heretical opinions, to account
 p. 3. King, ut for the assertion of the Unity of the Godhead with which the
 supra, p. 67. Creed commences².

After having acknowledged our belief in the existence of a God, the first title by which we address Him is that of **FATHER**. “Being a Father,” says the learned Barrow, “denotes causality, sustenance, beneficence, governance; especially when these operations are attended with particular care and affection: in all which respects, (severally considered, or jointly,) God may fitly be styled Father; Father of all things being: Father of all intellectual beings especially: the Father particularly of all men, and among men chiefly of good men.”

Barrow's
Expos. in
loc.

This primary meaning of the title “Father,” as applied to God, may perhaps be traced to a design to confute the heretical notions of the Godhead, put forth by Marcion and other Gnostics. They had an Epicurean conception of a Deity³, too little concerned in the affairs of a world (of which, according to them, he was not even the maker,) to take any active part in its direction; too regardful of his own ease and tranquillity, to exercise any parental or providential care over the creatures who were placed beneath him⁴: a degraded conception of the Godhead, which went beyond even the ignorance of the heathen, who, imperfect as was his knowledge of the Godhead, was yet willing to admit his parental care.

Acts xvii.
28.

Mal. ii. 10.
Deut. xxxii.
6.

1 John iii. 1.

The consideration of the relationship in which we stand to Him, as our Father by creation, redemption, and adoption, will more properly belong to the examination of the opening

¹ Manes inculcated the mere simple belief, that God was the cause of good, and that matter was the cause of evil. See Burton's Lect. on Eccl. Hist. xxviii. p. 409. Where also the doctrines of Manes are fully explained.

² That this was *one* object of the framers of the Creed, we learn from Irenæus, l. i. c. 2.

³ Epicuri invenientes Deum, neque sibi, neque aliis præstantem.—Iren. l. iii. c. 24.

⁴ Diabolico spiritu pleni, . . . alterum quendam excogitant Patrem, neque curantem, neque providentem eorum quæ sunt erga nos.—Id. l. v. c. 26.

address of the Lord's prayer, in which we are privileged to address Him by the more endearing appellation of "our ^{XV.} Father."

The main object of the Creed, in this clause, seems to be, rather to impress upon us a belief in that mysterious relationship in which the first and second persons of the Trinity stand to each other; namely, in that of Father and Son.

To our finite capacities it seems an impossible thing, for God thus to divide Himself, without derogating from His essence, or without implying some inferiority, in the parts so divided, to His own original self. The reason of this difficulty in our own minds is self-evident; it is, because, as long as the soul is clogged with the burden of the flesh, it is too circumscribed in its powers, to comprehend matters purely and essentially spiritual.

But "things which are impossible with men are possible with God;" and it is enough for our faith, though it may not be sufficient for our understanding, that He has revealed Himself as the Eternal Father of an Eternal Son; a relationship coeval with the essence, co-extensive with the attributes of the Deity. "The proper notion of the Father," says Pearson, "in whom we believe, is this: that He is a Person subsisting eternally in the one infinite essence of the Godhead; which essence or subsistence He hath received from no other person, but hath communicated the same essence, in which Himself subsisteth, by generation, to another Person, who by that generation is the Son."

Luke xviii.
27.

Pearson on
the Creed,
Art. i. p. 69.

The many passages of Scripture in which we read that our Blessed Saviour, even during His temporary humiliation upon earth, asserted His oneness and equality with the Father, His eternity, His omnipotence, forbid us to believe that there is any inferiority implied in this relationship. Priority of revelation to us there is, beyond all question; priority, but not superiority. And the name of "Son" seems rather to have been given in compassion to our limited comprehensions, that so, whilst we may admit this priority, we may, at the same time, acknowledge an unity of nature and essence, an identity of counsel and feeling. "Inasmuch," says St. Chrysostom, "as there is an unity of will in the Father and the Son, that which the Son wills, the Father wills also."

Chrys. in
Gal. i. 4.

LECTURE XV. And this is all that we dare conjecture upon the subject: for
 “dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High: whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of His name; yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know Him not as indeed He is, neither can know Him: and our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence, when we confess without confession, that His glory is inexplicable, His greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above, and we upon earth; therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few.”

Hooker's
Eccel. Polity,
I. i. c. 2. 2.

One, and only one attribute is ascribed to the Godhead in the Creed,—omnipotence; a quality, which implies the existence and possession of every other attribute assignable to Divinity. There was a reason for this selection.

The early heretics, by dividing God's power, could not, to be consistent with their own theories, regard Him as Almighty; by rendering other Principles co-eternal and co-equal with Him, they made the author of evil as truly powerful as the author of good. Nay, the common notion of the Gnostics, that the world was created either without God's knowledge, or in opposition to His will, at once proves to us both the cause and the necessity of the insertion of that clause in the Creed, which speaks of God as “Almighty.”

Cyril. Catech.
Lect. viii.
s. 1. 3.

It were needless to bring forward a multiplicity of texts to prove the point. It is enough to confess, that “He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?”

Dan. iv. 35.

And this omnipotence we recognize in each Person of the Trinity. Almighty indeed must have been that power, which called this universe into being; almighty that arm, which could have wrought the signs and wonders displayed by the Incarnate God; almighty that Spirit, which could have armed the Apostles' tongues with ability to speak, untaught, every language under heaven.

“But though, with the holy patriarch, we confess that God
 Job xlii. 2. ‘can do every thing,’ we must remember, that Omnipotence itself does not extend to contradictions or impossibilities.
 Heb. vi. 18. ‘God cannot lie,’ inasmuch as that would be contrary to His

perfect nature ; nor can He recall past events, which is manifestly impossible. When, therefore, we say, that the power of God is infinite, we mean that God is able to perform all things which do not imply in themselves contradiction and impossibility⁵."

The Creed next speaks of God as "Maker of heaven and earth," a clause which, though its sense is found in the earlier confessions of Irenæus and Tertullian, was not inserted in the Apostles' Creed until a comparatively late period.

"I form the light," said God by the mouth of His holy Prophet, "and create darkness;" and again, "I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded." And we have seen, how each Person in the Trinity took part in the wonderful work of creation; God the Father creating the heaven and the earth; God the Son pronouncing the awful words, "Let there be light, and there was light;" God the Holy Ghost brooding over the face of the waters, until all was brought to life, and form, and order; until God had seen every thing that He had made, that it was "very good."

But this was too simple a view of the great work of creation for the Gnostics to adopt. The pride of human learning would fain have more complex notions of the matter, and under the plea of elevating the abstract idea of God, by conceiving the creation of the world to be a work either beneath His notice,—or unworthy of His power, as a mixed compound of good and evil,—they invented a system, by which they imagined the Great First Cause as reposing in inert supremacy: suffering inferior agencies to work their will unchecked; to people heaven with a host of inferior powers, one of whom, as they contended, created the world. There were various modifications of this blasphemous theory, each setting human invention above the revelations of Scripture, each derogating from the dignity of the Godhead; "and although they came from different places, and spread different tenets, yet that one spirit, by which they were all guided and impregnated, so far

LECTURE
XV.

Ambros.
Ep. 37.
s. 1, 2.
August. de
Symb. ad
Catec. i. 3.
Theodor.
dial. iii.
Tomline's
Theol. vol. ii.
p. 67, 68.
Iren. adv.
Hær. l. i.
c. 2.
ib. c. 22.
Tertull. de
præscr. adv.
Hær. c. 13.
Barrow on
the Creed,
in loc.
Is. xlv. 7.
Ib. 12.
Lect. xiv.
p. 162.

Gen. i. 31.

⁵ Postremo, omnipotens est ad facienda omnia quæ facere voluerit. Nam ego dico quanta non possit. Non potest mori, non potest peccare, non potest mentiri, non potest falli. Tanta non potest: quæ si posset, non esset omnipotens.—Augustin. de Temp. Serm. 213.

LECTURE united them, as to deny the Supreme God to be the Creator
 XV. of the world ; though they could not agree among themselves
 King on the Creed, c. ii. who it was that was the cause thereof⁶.”

p. 99.

Iren. l. i.
 c. 22.

Thus, for example, Simon Magus and Menander held, that the world and its inhabitants were made by angels. The Basilidians taught, “that there were successively created, one after another, three hundred and sixty-five heavens, with their proper and peculiar angels ; ‘the angels of which last heaven, being the starry one that is visible to us, created this inferior world, with the inhabitants thereof.’” To protest against these and similar blasphemies, it was not without reason that we find God’s honour asserted in the Creed, and the creation of the world assigned to Him, upon the twofold authority of reason and revelation.

Theodoret,
 Epit. Hær.
 Fab de
 Basil.
 l. i. c. 4.
 King, ut
 supra, p. 100.

But heresy, if left unheeded, would have done more than merely rob us of our orthodoxy of faith ; it would have deprived the Christian disciple of some of the choicest sources of spiritual support, throughout the changes and chances of this mortal life.

Eph. i. 11.

If he acknowledges God as Almighty, he can repose unbounded confidence in Him, as in One, “who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” The same Lord is his protector, who “appeared unto Abraham, and said unto

⁶ “That matter was independent of the Deity, and co-eternal with Him, was a fundamental tenet of Platonism. . . . The Oriental notion was, that several successive emanations of spiritual beings had proceeded from God : and the theory of emanations became the favourite tenet of the Gnostics, and their grand invention for accounting for the origin of evil. They supposed the Deity, by acting upon His own mind, to have produced the first pair of beings, whom they called *Æons* ; and these, by successive emanations, gave birth to other beings, which gradually deteriorated, and had less resemblance to the Great First Cause. One of these later emanations passed the boundaries of the *Pleroma*, which was the abode of the Deity, and, there coming in contact with matter, created the world. According to this scheme, the Great First Cause had nothing to do with creation, nor was even aware of its having taken place. The evil which appeared in the world, was inherent in matter itself ; and the Deity was constantly employed in attempting to remedy it. . . . Some of the Gnostics believed the world to have been created by the evil principle : but the Creator was supposed by all of them to have more or less connexion with evil ; and the boast of Gnosticism was to free mankind from the tyranny of this Being, and to restore the *knowledge* of the true God.”—Burton’s Lect. on Eccl. Hist. vol. i. lect. iii. p. 77, 78.

See also King on the Creed, ch. ii. p. 101—105. Burton’s Bampton Lectures, lect. ii. p. 35—36.

him, I am the Almighty God." The same sustaining arm LECTURE XV. upholds him in his present sorrows, that of old bore aloft the Gen. xvii. 1. ark of refuge, unharmed amidst the tumult and desolation of the deluge; the same that brought out Israel, with signs and wonders, from the land of Egypt; the same that rescued the great Apostle of the Gentiles from perils, beneath the accumulation of which the unaided spirit of man must needs 2 Cor. xi. 23—27. have cowered in despair. Deny God's omnipotence, and you deny His providence: we must go forth then to fight with visible and invisible danger, unaided and alone.

So, too, if I am privileged to look upon this same Almighty God, as the Creator of the world and all I see around me, I can go a step beyond, and perceive how His providence is engaged in keeping up, and in protecting all that He has called into existence. And I can draw from thence the natural argument, that, if His care is thus stretched over the habitation, He will not forget the tenant. It is, then, because I can look upon Him as the "Maker of heaven and earth," that I can understand *why*, too, He has become my Redeemer, and my Sanctifier.

I see that He has clothed the lilies of the field with a garment of such beauty, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them: how much more, then, may Matt. vi. 28. I conclude, shall He not clothe me? My heavenly Father knoweth that I have earthly needs; and, as He knoweth, so He will supply to those who "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

Ib. 33.

But if I am not thus privileged to believe, and if I am to hold with the heretics of earlier days, that another spirit besides that of God, and that too a malignant spirit, called into being the wonders of this material world, myself included; if, too, I am to believe with him, that the Supreme Being sits on high, regardless of the fate of creatures so beneath Him as ourselves, what assurance can I have, that some new fit of spleen may not induce these perverse creators, to dash this world once more into the atoms from whence they called it, and to leave me crushed amidst the ruined mass, too insignificant to challenge the regard of Him who made me not, and who cannot therefore be supposed to care, whether there I am left to lie unto eternity?

LECTURE XVI.

JOHN XX. 31.

“These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing, ye might have life through His name.”

LECTURE XVI.

Pearson on
the Creed,
Art. ii.
p. 122.

AFTER having laid down belief in GOD THE FATHER, as the leading principle of religious faith, the Creed next teaches us to believe in the second person of the Trinity, “JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD.” Our blessed Saviour is here represented under a threefold description : first, by His nomination as Jesus Christ ; secondly, by His generation as the only Son of God ; thirdly, by His dominion as our Lord.

Acts vii. 45.
Heb. iv. 8.

The name “Jesus” was far from being uncommon amongst the Jews. It is in the Greek what Joshua is in the Hebrew ; which remarkable type of Christ is twice called in the New Testament by the Greek translation of His name. So, too, we meet with Jesus, the son of Sirach, the author of the book Ecclesiasticus ; and St. Paul speaks of one Jesus, who was also called Justus.

Col. iv. 11.

Gen. xvii. 5.

Ib. xxxii. 28.

Num. xiii.
16.

All Hebrew names had their meaning ; and there were some which were conferred by God upon particular individuals, as indicative of their characters, or prophetic of their privileges. Thus, Abraham was so called of God, as the “Father of many nations.” Jacob’s name was changed to that of Israel, as a token, that he, wanderer as he had been, was exalted as a “Prince of God.” And Moses, acting doubtless under the instigation of the Most High, called Oshea, the son of Nun, Jehoshua, or Joshua ; a prophetic intimation, that he, as the type of the Spiritual Saviour of the world, was destined to become the temporal saviour of the Hebrew people. In like manner, when the angel announced to Mary, that she was the chosen Virgin from whose womb the long-expected hope of Israel was to spring,

he commanded her to call His name "Jesus," "for He shall save His people from their sins;" thus, even before the Saviour's birth, presignifying, by His name, the blessings that God had purposed to confer on us through Him.

LECTURE
XVI.
Matt. i. 21.
Luke i. 31.

And amply has the Saviour vindicated His claim to that holy appellation; for He hath revealed to us that method of salvation, which was foreseen by the Father as necessary, before the foundation of the world, and foredetermined by the free and unmerited act of His mercy. It is He, who hath quickened us, when we were "dead in trespasses and sins;" He, "who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel;" He, who by His own humiliation, His own agony, His own death, His own sacrifice, hath "put away sin;" He, who freely offers to all repentant and believing sinners the salvation thus revealed, and thus wrought out; and he is further pronounced, "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Eph. ii. 1.

2 Tim. i. 10.

Heb. ix. 26.
1 John ii.
1, 2. i. 9.

Heb. vii. 25.

When, then, the Christian professes to believe in Jesus, it is as if he said, "I believe that Jesus, in the highest, and utmost importance of that name, to be the Saviour of the world: inasmuch as He hath revealed to the sons of men the only way for the salvation of their souls, and wrought the same way out for them by the virtue of His blood, obtaining remission for sinners, making reconciliation for enemies, paying the price of redemption for captives; and shall, at last, Himself actually confer the same salvation which He hath promulged and procured, upon all those which unfeignedly and stedfastly believe in Him. I acknowledge there is no other way to heaven beside that which He hath shewn us, there is no other means which can procure it for us but His blood, there is no other person which shall confer it on us, but Himself. And with this full acknowledgment, I BELIEVE IN JESUS."

Pearson on
the Creed,
Art. ii.
p. 140.

But Jesus is further revealed to us by His title, Christ, which is, in the Greek, the same as Messiah in the Hebrew, each signifying "anointed."

To the Jew, the word "anointed" was a name which conveyed the idea of a peculiar dignity; it was indicative of something separated from the world, or from profane uses,

LECTURE and consecrated by a solemn act of dedication to the service
XVI. of Jehovah. If he turned to the records of the law, he would there find instances both of things and persons, made holy unto the Lord by this act of anointing.

When Jacob awoke from out the heavenly vision, with which the Lord comforted the weary exile's heart upon the plains of Luz, his first act, after acknowledging the unseen though recognized presence of Jehovah, was to anoint, and so to dedicate, the stone on which he slept, as a memorial to his heavenly Comforter. "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it." So, too, in after times, when God Himself vouchsafed to dictate to Moses the particulars of His ceremonial worship, it was His command, that all things, set apart or made for His especial service, should be consecrated by the anointing of oil. "Thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy; whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy." Nay, so entirely was this oil of consecration set apart for Divine purposes, that it was forbidden to the Jew, on pain of death, to make any other like it, or to apply it to any other purpose: and, in the days of their backsliding, we find Ezekiel severely reproaching his countrymen, for having disobeyed this command.

In like manner with regard to persons: we find, that they who were considered to be more immediately in the service of Jehovah, whether priests, kings, or prophets, underwent a solemn act of consecration, became "anointed," before they were permitted to enter upon their privileges, or their functions.

Thus, God's first High Priest, Aaron, and his sons were anointed, and so consecrated and sanctified, "that they might minister unto" Him "in the priest's office." Samuel received God's commands to anoint Saul and David kings of Israel. Zadok and Nathan anointed Solomon king: and when Elijah's mission was well-nigh accomplished, he was charged of God to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his room.

Gen. xxviii.
18.

Ex. xxx.
26—29.

Ib. 31—33.

Ezek. xxiii.
41.

Ex. xxviii.
41. xxix. 7.
xxx. 30.

1 Sam. x. 1.

Ib. xvi. 13.

1 Kings i. 39.

Ib. xix. 16.

The Jew, then, was accustomed to look upon anointing in a far more solemn light, than it was possible for the Gentile to regard it; for the ceremony came down to him, hallowed as God's institution, and authorized by His command, as a typical representation of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon Christ, and on His Church. LECTURE
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There are other passages in the holy volume, in which this custom is alluded to, which convey a prophetical, rather than an historical meaning; which speak of an anointed one not yet born,—of one, invested with a peculiar degree of dignity and power. Such, for example, is the prophecy contained in the prayer of Hannah. “The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, and He shall give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed:” and many passages of a similar character are to be found in the Psalms, which, however applicable in a primary sense to historical person-
1 Sam. ii. 10.
Ps. ii. 2.
xx. 6.
xxviii. 3.
ages, were still so manifestly invested with a secondary, and that a holier meaning, that the Jews themselves could not but so interpret them.

But there was one, so essentially and so entirely prophetical, that its application must be limited to the Godhead, to whom it is addressed: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre; Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness, therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.” From this, and other passages of Scripture, the Jews were accustomed to speak, by the title of “Messiah” or “Anointed,” of that great Deliverer, in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed; the Redeemer, who was to spring from the old stock of Israel, the subject of all type and prophecy, from the hour of the fall to that of His advent. It is under this title that Daniel spake of Him, when he marked out the time of His appearance. And it is under the same title that He was recognized, when He came, by the first called of His chosen twelve. “We have found,” said Andrew to his brother Peter, “we have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.”
Ps. xlv. 6, 7.
Dan. ix. 25,
26.

John i. 41.

Nor were these the only reasons, why this title was affixed to the object of their dearest hopes and wishes. Eager as were the Jews for the time of their prophesied exaltation,

LECTURE through the instrumentality of the Messiah, it was natural
 XVI. that they should be more than commonly interested in the study of those prophecies, which, either by common consent or by the influence of a higher power, were considered as applicable to Him, either in a primary or secondary, a typical or historical sense. They perceived then, that, in these prophecies, He was spoken of under each of those three characters, "priest," "king," and "prophet," who, as we have already seen, were "anointed," before taking upon themselves the respective offices to which they severally were called: and hence they derived another motive for bestowing the title of "anointed" on Him, who was destined to embody, in His own person, the sacerdotal, regal, and prophetic offices.

PRIEST.
 Zech. vi. 13.
 Ps. cx. 4.
 Dan. ix. 24.
 Is. liii. 12.
 KING.
 Is. ix. 6.
 Jer. xxiii. 5.
 Dan. vii. 14.
 Hos. iii. 5.
 Zech. ix. 9.
 PROPHET.
 Deut. xviii.
 18, 19.

Acts i. 6.
 See Luke
 xxiv. 21.

Matt. xiii.
 11.
 John viii.
 23.
 Ib. xviii. 36.

Familiar, then, as were the Jews with the leading prophecies concerning Christ, and applying to Him, as they did before His advent, the predictions respecting His humiliation, as well as those which referred to His dominion, it may seem strange, that they should have entertained but one, and that a worldly view of the character of the Messiah. "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" was a question which fully displayed the anxious feelings of the Jew, and yet it proceeded from those chosen ones, who had followed the steps of Jesus throughout His three years' ministry, who had been admitted into His confidence, to whom it had been "given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," and who had been distinctly told that their Master's kingdom was "not of this world." Erroneous as was the view that the nation entertained, of the character and mission of the Messiah, and deeply rooted as was the prejudice with which they clung to this view, it was not altogether unnatural that they should entertain it.

When the Jew, taught from earliest years to look to the advent of the Messiah as his dearest national and individual hope, referred to the prophecies as the only authority for the existence of that hope, the more closely he studied those holy revelations the more clearly would he see, that the hope of Israel was described in them under a twofold character: the one, represented as a despised, rejected, humble, persecuted, suffering, and ultimately murdered being; the other

depicted, as invested with all the glorious attributes of the king, the priest, the prophet, the conqueror, the deliverer, the mighty one, "travelling in the greatness of His strength."

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It was natural, that he should feel a difficulty in reconciling these apparently conflicting declarations respecting the same personage; for it should be remembered, that he had not that key to their interpretation which we possess, but had (together with ourselves) the disadvantage of studying them in a language, which had for many years ceased to be familiar to him. It was natural too, that he should defer, in this difficulty, to the voice of his Church, as put forth by those "who sat in Moses' seat," the Scribes and Pharisees. And we have abundant proof in the writings of the Evangelists, that the all but universal interpretation of these prophecies was that, which was exhibited in the popular belief of the day; namely, the expectation of a temporal Messiah. Nor will this belief appear so extraordinary, if we bear in mind the peculiar national and political position of the Jews, at the time of our Saviour's advent, and for some years preceding it.

Matt. xxiii.
2.

See Lect.
xix. p. 220,
note.

They could not forget what they *had* been; they could not but be impatient, when they remembered what they *were*. They had been a people, separated from the rest of the world by God Himself; their rites, ceremonies, ordinances, their civil and religious polity, dictated expressly by Him. From the earliest period of their existence as a people, God's hand had been visibly with them from generation to generation; at one time in support, at another, in correction.

They remembered that there was a time, when they were able to bid defiance to the Gentile nations around them, though tenfold their superiors in physical power and territorial extent. It was a part of their history, that, in the days of Solomon, they stood alone in the world, though a small people, living in a country scarcely two hundred miles in length, by eighty in its broadest part: their monarch's fame at that time was such, that, according to the testimony of the sacred historian, he "exceeded all the kings of the earth, for riches and for wisdom." They could not forget this dominion and this power, and bitter must have been the contrast, when they remembered what they were; tribu-

Horne's
Introduc.
vol. iii. p. 1.
ch. 1. s. 2.

1 Kings
x. 23.

LECTURE ^{XVI.} taries to Rome,—to Gentiles, who derided their customs, scoffed at their claims, and only tolerated their worship, partly from indifference to its peculiarities, partly because it was the policy of Rome, to permit her tributaries to retain unmolested their national customs, and religious observances. In their present position, then, there was every thing to remind them of their former glory, and to make them contrast it with their painfully degraded state : and it is not to be wondered at, if national pride and a jealous sense of their degradation led them, to look for a Messiah suited to their peculiar exigency : to reject, in short, or explain away all idea of a suffering and humbled one, and, in the Person of their promised Deliverer, to behold alone the victorious monarch, who should trample upon the infidel oppressor and the Gentile lord, and lead forth the armies of Israel, conquering and to conquer, to the utmost limits of the earth.

The sin, then, of the Jews appears to have consisted, not so much in misinterpreting the prophecies in the first instance, as in persisting in their error, when they had the evidence of their own senses to correct it.

When the fulfilment of prophecy in the person of Jesus made even the Samaritans exclaim, “ We have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world ;” when many even of the Jews “ believed on Him, and said, When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done ?” whilst others said, “ Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ ?” when miracles to such an extent, and in such a degree⁷, as the world never yet beheld, were, hour after hour, proving the identity of Jesus of Nazareth with the Messiah of the

⁷ It should be remembered, that the Evangelists give us the details of only a very few of these miracles, as specimens of the rest ; for we read in many places of our Saviour healing all the sick that were brought to Him, Matt. iv. 23, 24 ; ix. 35 ; xii. 15 ; xiv. 14. 35, 36. Only three cases of our Saviour's raising the dead are recorded, mainly perhaps, to shew His power over death in all its stages ; for one was raised when just dead, Matt. ix. 18—25 ; the second, when being carried out to burial, Luke vii. 12—16 ; the third, when four days dead, and when, in that hot climate, the work of corruption must have begun, John xi. 39. But it is not to be inferred, that these were the only instances in which He raised the dead. See Matt. xi. 5, and the commission given to the Apostles during His ministry, Matt. x. 8.

Scriptures,—awful indeed was the blindness on the part of the authorized interpreters of those Scriptures, which could induce them so to warp them, as to make prejudice become the master both of reason and of evidence; and fearful was the sin, on the part of the more educated classes, in denying the visible power of the Holy Ghost,—in ascribing to the agency of Satan marvels, which the common people were willing enough to attribute to their right source, the finger of God. It is no wonder, if the same thing happened to them as did of old time to Pharaoh,—that a time came, when their eyes and hearts were sealed alike; when they could not believe.

Matt. ix. 34.
Mark iii. 22.
Luke xi. 15.

It is in this Jesus Christ, this anointed Saviour, that we profess to believe in the Apostles' Creed. But we further declare that He is God's "only Son, our Lord."

Respecting the mode of this eternal generation, it were worse than vain for man to enquire; still less to presume to offer any decision. It is one of those points, which, though the Almighty has commanded us to believe, He has thought fit to invest with an impenetrable cloud of mystery. Thus much, however, respecting this doctrine of our faith we can gather from Scripture: that He is "not the adopted, but the only-begotten Son of God; not created in time, but begotten of His Father from all eternity⁸, before all ages of the celestial or terrestrial worlds: of the same nature with His Father. God begotten of God, after a mysterious and spiritual manner, as light is kindled of light⁹, not diminishing His Father's substance, and yet being very God of very God; derived not as the creatures, for He was begotten and not made; and is

Athanas. de
Incarn.
Verb.
Dei, 37.

John i.
14. 18.
Ps. ii. 7.
Heb. i. 5—
11. v. 5.
Coloss. i.
15—17.
John xiv.
10—20.
xvii. 21—23.
John i. 9.
ix. 5.
Heb. i. 3.

⁸ "It is true," said the venerable Alexander, patriarch of Alexandria, "that the Son was begotten: but he that enquires further into the manner thereof is not to be reckoned among the pious, seeing he hearkens not to that which is written. Seek not after things which are too difficult for thee, and search not into those things which are too high for thee: for if the knowledge of many other things, far inferior to this, exceed the reach of a human understanding, how then shall any, without madness, pretend curiously to search into the essence of the Divine Word? of whom the Holy Ghost, by the prophet, saith, Who shall declare His generation?"—*Epist. ad Alex. Constantinop. apud Theod. Eccl. Hist. lib. i. c. 4.*

⁹ "The sun, at all times, generates rays from his own body; these rays are emitted without any change in the sun himself."—Zanchius, *de Nat. Dei*, quoted in *Horsley's Controv. Letters. Disq. iv. p. 530.*

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Matt. i. 23.
John i. 1.
Heb. i. 8.
Col. i. 15.
ii. 9.
John x. 30.
Col. i. 16.
John i. 3.
Comber's
Comp. to the
Temple, pt.
iii. s. 5.

equal to God, being of one nature and substance with the Father, and of the same dignity and power; for He is that eternal Word, by whom all things were made out of nothing."

Deeply mysterious as is this doctrine, the title of "The Word," as given by St. John to our blessed Saviour, may afford some analogous explanation of the connexion between the two first Persons of the Trinity. "The Divine Person," says Bishop Tomline, "who has accomplished the salvation of mankind, is called 'the Word,' and 'the Word of God,' not only because God at first created, and still governs, all things by Him; but because as men discover their sentiments and designs to one another by the intervention of words, speech, or discourse, so God by His Son discovers His gracious designs in the fullest and clearest manner to men."

Tomline's
Elem. of
Theol.
vol. ii. p. 109.

This analogy, between the Father's generation of the Son and the mind's generation of a conception of itself in thought, was esteemed by Zanchius, a writer, according to Bishop Horsley's testimony, of great learning and piety, as "an hypothesis philosophically probable; which might be very properly employed to convince those who, upon philosophical grounds, made a difficulty of the only-begotten Son's eternity, that what they called in question might easily be; though he thought it presumptuous in any one to assert too positively that this analogy represents the way in which the thing actually is¹."

Horsley's
Controv.
Letters.
Disq. iv.
p. 530.

Interesting as it is to observe the manner in which master minds have thus grappled with one of the greatest, perhaps the very greatest mystery of our faith, it is a matter of thankfulness, that the Church of England has not presumed to explain the method of the Divine generation, but has been contented to assert it as a Scriptural, and therefore an undoubted fact.

Leave we, then, these disquisitions, which must end, where they began, in a confession of our ignorance of the Divine

¹ "The Eternal Son," says Melancthon, "is the second Person of the Divinity, which Person is the substantial and entire image of the Eternal Father, which the Father, *contemplating and considering Himself*, generates from Eternity."—Melancthon's Works, vol. i. p. 307. Quoted in Horsley's Controv. Letters, p. 526.

Mind, and of our utter inability* to see God as He is; and, LECTURE XVI. since we can only contemplate Him, as through a darkened glass, let us come to that point, which is matter of proof as well as of fact,—the Divinity of our Lord.

We have seen already, that the Socinian, “who denies the Lord that bought him,” is in error, when he claims the Fathers of the primitive Church, as sanctioning the position, that Jesus Christ is not “perfect God,” as well as “perfect man.” Those early witnesses, to the “truth as it is in Jesus,” were too thoroughly acquainted with the minds, and too well imbued with the lessons of the Apostles and their immediate successors, and, let us add, too well grounded in Scripture itself, to forget that it is written, “Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.” And that this is the concurrent testimony of Scripture, it will be easy to establish, by shewing, that the names and attributes of God are given therein to Jesus Christ, that works peculiar to the Divinity are ascribed to Him, and that worship is both paid, and commanded to be paid to Him. These passages, then, must be expunged from the canonical Scriptures, and proved to be the forgeries of a later age, before the simple humanity of Jesus Christ can be safely asserted, to the exclusion of His Divinity.

Lect. xiv.
p. 159.

2 Pet. ii. 1.

Eph. iv. 21.

1 John ii.
22, 23.

It were to transcribe no small portion of Holy Writ, were every instance brought forward, in which the Divinity of Christ is either positively expressed, or indirectly implied. A few examples will suffice to prove the point.

That Jehovah is a title conferred on God, is a fact that requires no argument to support it. But this title is, in many places, applied to Christ; for example,—the Prophet Isaiah speaks thus of Jehovah², “Thus saith the Lord (Jehovah), the king of Israel; and His Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts

² It must be borne in mind, that our translators of the authorized version of the Bible seem to have participated in the scruples of the Jews, respecting the use of the word “Jehovah.” The Jews, it is well known, religiously abstained from pronouncing it; and, in reading the law, substituted another word, “Adonai,” for it, Gen. xviii. 3; and our translators render the name “Jehovah” by the word LORD, making the distinction between it and “Adonai” by printing it, as above, in capital letters.

LECTURE (Jehovah Sabaoth); I am the First, and I am the Last, and
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 beside me there is no God." We have here the several
 Is. xliv. 6. titles of Redeemer, Jehovah, the First and the Last, and God,
 applied to the same Person. But we know how frequently
 Rom. iii. 24. the title of Redeemer is given, or the work of redemption
 1 Cor. i. 30. ascribed to Christ; we know also that St. John, in the Revela-
 Eph. i. 7. tion, applies to Him the remarkable appellation of "First
 Heb. ix. 12. and Last:" "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and
 the end, the First and the Last." We must include, then,
 Rev. xxii. the title of Jehovah as belonging to Christ, together with the
 13. two other appellations, for it is manifestly impossible to sup-
 pose, that the words of Isaiah refer to two different persons.
 Again, "I am the Lord" (Jehovah), says God, when speak-
 ing by the mouth of His holy prophet; "and beside me
 Is. xliii. 11. there is no Saviour." But Christ is constantly styled "the
 Saviour" in the New Testament: "Grow in grace," says St.
 2 Pet. iii. 18. Peter, "and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus
 John iv. 42. Christ." He is the same only Saviour, then, of whom Isaiah
 Acts v. 31. spake under the title of Jehovah. Once more,—we are told,
 Titus i. 4. both by Moses and by David, that it was Jehovah whom the
 2 Pet. ii. 20. children of Israel tempted in the desert, when He "sent
 1 John iv. 14. fiery serpents among the people:" but St. Paul applies this
 Num. xxi. 6. to Jesus Christ; "neither let us tempt *Christ*, as some of
 Ps. xcv. 8, 9. them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." The
 lxxviii. 56. Jehovah, then, of whom Moses and David spake, and the
 1 Cor. x. 9. Christ, of whom St. Paul spake, are one and the same.
 Compare
 Zech. xii. 10.
 John xix. 37.
 Is. vi. 1—3.
 Ib. 9, 10.
 John xii. 41.

And there are many passages, in which the title of God is
 given to Jesus Christ in such positive terms, that we must
 invent new canons of criticism, and new laws of language,
 before these passages can be so explained away, or modified,
 as to sanction the interpretation of the Socinian and the
 sceptic. Here again, the passages are so numerous, that the
 difficulty lies in the selection, rather than in the application.

That the title of the "Word" is frequently applied to
 See p. 180. Jesus Christ, is too well known to require proof. St. John,
 who wrote his Gospel for the express purpose of establishing
 the Divinity of our Saviour, in opposition to the heretics of
 his day, commences it with the declaration, that the "Word"
 is "God." And, in his first Epistle, when speaking of Christ,
 he says, "This is the true God, and eternal life." St. Paul

Lect. vii.
 p. 67.
 John i. 1.
 1 John v. 20.
 Cf. John
 xx. 21.

also, when alluding to the revelation of the mystery of godliness, embodies in his description some of the most striking passages of our Saviour's life, and refers them all to God. "God," he says, "was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory³." The allusion to Christ in this passage is so clear, and the testimony to His Divinity so striking, that the Socinian is reduced to the sorry subterfuge of bad scholarship to explain it away.

LECTURE
XVI.

1Tim. iii. 16.

See Slade's
Annot. in
loc.

We find also Christ called "the great God," the "mighty God," "the only wise God, our Saviour." He, "who is over all, God blessed for ever." We find it also declared, that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Language must be strangely misapplied, or the spirit of infidelity have singularly blinded the judgment, if a careful perusal of these passages with the context, and above all in the original languages, fails in satisfying us, that the sacred writers intended therein to apply the title of God to Jesus Christ. We must make our choice, then, either to admit their testimony that Christ is God, or to disprove the fact of their inspiration.

Tit. ii. 13.

Is. ix. 6.
Jude 25.

Rom. ix. 5.

Col. ii. 9.

But, further, we find ascribed to Christ attributes, which our very reason tells us can belong only to the Godhead. He is spoken of as "Eternal;" and St. John begins his Gospel with assigning this attribute to Him. Omnipotence and omniscience are ascribed to Him; for His own testimony of Himself after His resurrection was, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;" and St. John declares, that He "needed not that any should testify" to Him "of man: for He knew what was in man." And St. Paul tells us, that in Him "are hid *all* the treasures of wisdom and

John i. 1—3.

Matt. xxviii.
18. See also
Rev. i. 8.

John ii. 25.

Col. ii. 3.

³ The Scripture references are too numerous to be inserted in the margin. "God manifest in the flesh," John i. 14; 1 John iii. 5; ib. i. 1, 2; Phil. ii. 6, 7; "justified in the Spirit," that is, by the influence or effusion of the Spirit, Himself working miracles thereby, and His Apostles after Him, Matt. xii. 28; Rom. i. 3, 4; Acts ii. 33; x. 38: "seen of angels," Heb. i. 6; Luke ii. 9, 13; Matt. iv. 11; Luke xxii. 43; xxiv. 4; Acts i. 10: "preached unto the Gentiles," Acts viii. 35; xi. 1; xiv. 25; xvii. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 2; Gal. i. 8; Eph. ii. 17; Phil. i. 18; Col. i. 23: "believed on in the world," Acts xi. 21; xiv. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 11; John ii. 23; iv. 39: "received up into glory," Mark xvi. 19; Luke xxiv. 51; Acts i. 10, 11.

LECTURE knowledge." The works of God are ascribed to Him; for it
 XVI. was the Christ, of whom the Apostle spake, "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature," when he declared, that "by Him were all things *created*, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him;" Col. i. 15, 16. a similar testimony to that of St. John, who said that "all things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." And, we shall have occasion John i. 3. to see hereafter, the power and the majesty of God, break forth in the miracles that He performed, as very man, on earth.

Such as
 Matt. xix. 17.
 1 Cor. xv. 24.
 John vi. 38.
 xiv. 28.
 Mark xiii.
 32.

Distinctly, then, as the Scriptures assign to Him the names, the attributes, the works, and the power of God, how are we to explain those texts, in which His inferiority to the Father is either implied or expressed? We answer, in the words of a departed champion of the faith, these texts "are most simply and satisfactorily explained, by referring them either to His human nature, or to the special office He vouchsafed to undertake, and voluntarily assumed, that of our Mediator and Redeemer. He was 'perfect God, and perfect man; equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead; inferior to the Father, as touching His manhood:' this is the master key to the whole mystery of His incarnation. Or if there be any passages not clearly explicable on this ground, they may yet be solved, by referring them, not to any difference or inequality of *nature*, but merely to that *mode or order of existence*, by which it is impossible, that either the Son or the Holy Ghost should subsist, but as partaking eternally and indivisibly of the substance of the Father."

Van Mil-
 dert's Ser.
 vol. i. s. xxiii.
 p. 482.

And as He is our God, so is He our Lord: Lord of all things, both in heaven and in earth; Lord of our bodies, which are "not our own," but set apart as temples of that Spirit, which is the gift of the Father through Him; Lord of our souls, which are "bought with a price;" the price of His sufferings, and His blood; redeemed, through Him, from the heavy curse of everlasting death.

1 Cor. vi. 20.

LECTURE XVII.

GALAT. iv. 4.

“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”

It is well known that, at the period of our Saviour's manifestation in the flesh, the whole world was looking forward to the birth of some illustrious personage in Judea, whose dominion was to extend over the habitable globe. LECTURE XVII.

This belief amongst the Gentiles may perhaps be traced, partly, to some confused knowledge of the original promise given to Abraham, which had been transmitted through his children by Keturah; partly, to the traditionary remembrance of the prophecies of the Gentile seer Balaam. The expectation derived from these sources would naturally have been kept up by their occasional intercourse with the Jews, and must have been materially strengthened by the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, which was probably made about two hundred and eighty-six years before the Christian æra.

See on this, Horsley's Dissertation on the Prophecies of the Messiah, known to the heathen, p. 32. 90. Horne's Introduc. vol. ii. pt. 1. ch. 5. s. 1. § 2.

But the Jews had surer grounds for their expectations, than mere tradition. To them the leading prophecies respecting the Messiah were as familiar as their very prayers, and, when the time marked out by Daniel for His advent was at hand, we can readily imagine, how anxiously each member of the Jewish community watched every waning hour, as it brought nearer and nearer the hope of their deliverance; their men longing for the day, when they should behold all nations of the earth in subjection to the regenerate sway of Jerusalem, their women looking for the Christ with feelings as ardent, but perhaps more holy: for where was the Jewess,—maiden, wife, or mother,—who did not cherish some latent hope, that

LECTURE she might be the honoured instrument of bringing into the
XVII. world the long looked-for joy of Israel?

Luke xvii.
20.

1 Cor. i. 27.

But the "kingdom of God cometh not with observation;" and, more than once, in His dealings with mankind, hath He "chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." Thus the mother of the Messiah was not selected (as probably the Jews might have anticipated she would have been,) from the high or the wealthy classes: but the "highly favoured," "the blessed among women," was a simple maiden of a decayed branch of the royal house of Judah, the affianced wife of a humble artizan, unknown probably beyond her own domestic circle, but doubtless known of God as one, whose faith and piety were pre-eminent; one, whose chaste body had long been the tabernacle of the Holy Ghost, and was now to experience His overshadowing power in a still more gracious and mysterious manner.

Is. vii. 14.

If imagination were permitted to mingle itself with this sacred theme, we could picture to ourselves the contemplative maiden musing over the prophecy of Isaiah, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," and then asking herself if it were possible, that *she* might be that virgin, that from her Immanuel might spring.

Luke i. 28.

But thus much we know: the angel of the Lord was commissioned to seek her in her retirement: "he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be." The angel saw her doubts and fears, and spoke to her heart rather than to her words; "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God, and behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Well might Mary have been troubled by this extraordinary announcement; bewildered as much by the presence of the angel, as by the tidings that he brought her. The purity of her mind is evident from

Ib. 30—33.

her reply: "*How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?*" LECTURE
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 And the angel answered, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke i. 34,
35. The angel adduced, unasked, the example of her cousin Elisabeth, who had conceived in her old age, and concluded with reminding her (as he had done to Sarah upon a similar occasion), that, "with God nothing shall be impossible." Gen. xviii.
14. Her doubts are set at rest, her misgivings hushed: and "when," in the language of a venerable father of our Church, "she was so ascertained that she should be a mother and a maid, and that two glories, like the two luminaries of heaven, should meet in her, that she might in such a way become the mother of her Lord, that she might, with better advantages, be His servant, then all her hopes and all her desires received such satisfaction, and filled all the corners of her heart so much, as indeed it was fain to make room for its reception." Jer. Taylor's Life of
Christ, pt. i.
s. 1. § 7. Though she could not doubt but that her conception, miraculous as it was, would expose her to reproach (as we read it did to suspicion), yet her answer bespeaks her unreserved submission to God's will, and her perfect confidence that, as He had promised, so He would perform. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word." See Athanas.
Hom. in
Annun.
Deip. s. 8.

Luke i. 38.

The angel departed; and then was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, the interpretation of which was hidden from the Jews, until its accomplishment proved that its meaning was literal, not figurative; "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth; a woman shall compass a man." Jer. xxxi. 22. In due time the Holy Babe was born: and so the virgin's offspring, as conceived of the Holy Ghost, was perfect God; yet literally the promised seed of the woman, and thus perfect man.

Wonderful indeed were the Divine counsels, by which the great mystery of the incarnation was made manifest to man. The Saviour's destined mother was a virgin,—that the offering for sin, in the person of her child, might have no spot of sin itself, in that it was produced without the intervention of man, the sinner. She was affianced to Joseph, a just man, that no slur might be cast upon her reputation; she was married to him, "lest honourable marriage might be disreputed,

LECTURE and seem inglorious, by a positive rejection from any partici-
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Jer. Taylor,
 ut supra, ad
 sec. i. 6.
 Basil. Hom.
 in sanc.
 Chris. Gen.
 s. 3.

The miraculous conception of the Blessed Virgin was a sore stumbling-block both to the Jewish and the Gentile world. In each case, perhaps, the motive principle of unbelief was the difficulty of reconciling the fact, as recorded in the Gospel, with their own experience, or with their notions of what was consistent with the dignity and attributes of God.

Even when we make all due allowance for the disappointment of the Jews, in finding Him, who was manifested to them as the Christ, so totally different in character from the deliverer whom they had expected, it still seems somewhat strange, that they should ever have stumbled thus at the very threshold of Christianity. St. Cyril, with reference to the objections raised by the Jews against the miraculous conception, argues, that they, of all people, had no right to look upon it as an impossibility. He appeals to facts as astounding in their own history which they *did* believe, and, amongst them, to the case of Sarah; a case, upon which their very existence, as a nation founded by God, depended. "Which is the difficult thing," he asks, "for an aged woman, barren, and past age, to bear, or for a virgin in her youth to have a child? If, then, it be contrary to nature for a barren woman and for a virgin to bear, either reject both, or receive both; for it is the same God who wrought the one, and provided the other."

Cyril, Catec.
 Lect. xii. 28.

We are not so much surprised at the difficulties which beset the more philosophic and argumentative Greek, upon a point so contradictory to the established order of nature. He had no old standing miracles connected with his national records. God in time past had not so marvellously dealt with his forefathers, as to render no future wonders too hard for him to believe. His knowledge of the Most High was new; and he brought to the investigation of divine truth, not that childlike spirit of faith with which the Christian disciple should regard the oracles of God, but the subtle and question-

¹ Ignatius says, that three mysteries escaped the knowledge of the devil, the virginity of Mary, the birth of Christ, the death of Christ. Ep. ad Ephes. 19. "Res vero ipsa, quam Ignatius exprimit, passim apud sanctos Patres invenitur." Not. in ed. Oxon. 1838.

ing habits of the schools. It is not, then, much to be wondered at, if he attempted to bring the mysteries of revelation down to the level of human reasoning, and to try them by the depths of his own understanding.

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Profitless as would be the task of enumerating all the wild theories of the Gnostic philosophy, it may not be without interest to touch briefly upon some of its views, as connected with the incarnation: they will serve to shew, that the difficulties of scepticism are greater than those of faith; and that the infidels would have us receive as true, far less intelligible positions than the Gospel lays down as points of faith.

The union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ was the chief doctrinal difficulty that led to this extravagant theology. Its leading feature was the separation of the persons of Christ and Jesus: they acknowledged the divine nature of the former, they denied that of the latter. Some believed that Jesus was the son of Mary and Joseph in the natural way: others held that Christ, being an emanation from God, was united to the man Jesus at His baptism; that the divine principle, so imparted, enabled Him to perform miracles, remained with Him until His passion, and then left Him to expire on the cross. This doctrine, making, as it does, the distinction between Christ and Jesus, though it confirms in a remarkable degree the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, entirely destroys the notion of His atonement. Jesus is thus reduced to the level of a mere preacher of righteousness, differing in no essential respect from any other prophet, as far as his connexion with God was concerned, except as being in the possession of greater power, and as endued with clearer and more extensive information.

Origen,
Com. in
Joan. tom.
xx. s. 24.
Iren. l. 1. c.
25. l. iii. c. 17.

Ib. lib. iii.
c. 16.
Burton's
Bampt.
Lect.
ii. p. 39.

Horsley's
Serm. xxxiv.
p. 80.

Basilides, again, believed that Jesus was a mere phantom, and not actual flesh and blood: but unable to resist the evidence of the evangelist, that a real body was nailed to the cross, he invented the strange hypothesis, that the appearance of Jesus was transferred to Simon of Cyrene, who was crucified in His stead, whilst Christ returned to the Pleroma, or great First Cause, from whom He had originally descended.

Epiph. adv.
Hær. lib. i.
tom. 2. s. 3.

Marcion held that God came down from heaven, and sojourned in the virgin without participating in her substance²,

² In another place, Athanasius thus sums up the orthodox doctrine of the

LECTURE XVII. being unable to receive any thing from the nature of man that was fallen under sin, and subjected to the ruler of wickedness.

Athanas.
contr.
Apollin.
lib. ii. 3.

Others, varying only the words, but adhering to the substance of the objections of the rest, conceived it absurd, that Christ should join our flesh to His pure essence; and so, to cut the knot which they could not untie, they held that Christ received none of His material substance from the flesh of the virgin, but that He assumed unto Himself a heavenly body, which passed through Mary, as water through a pipe, without receiving any thing from her: for which reason, say they, though we are ready to admit that He is born *by* Mary, we deny that He was born *of* Mary. They held that Mary was the instrument of His birth, but denied that He was "man, of the substance of His mother".³

Origen,
Dial. contr.
Marcion.
s. 4.
Athanas.
Serm. contr.
omn.
Hær. 8.
Iren. l. i.
ch. 1.

Cyril, Catec.
Lect. iv. 9.

The adoption of these theories would inevitably lead us to the conclusion of St. Cyril; "If the incarnation is a phantom, salvation likewise is a phantom;" for we cannot see, how an effectual expiatory sacrifice for the sins of men could be offered up, except upon the supposition of the union of the two natures, divine and human, in one Christ.

Rom. iii. 23.

Once prove the fact of the corruption of our nature; once establish the point that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and that He is pledged to punish their transgressions to the full; then two things of necessity follow, first, that some perfect satisfaction for this sin must be made to God, before the sinner can be admitted to His presence; and, secondly, that no being, purely and solely human, could offer this satisfaction even for his own sins, much less for those of all the fallen race of Adam.

And yet it is a matter of ordinary justice, that, as man had sinned, so man should pay the penalty: but this could never have been done, had the Redeemer been born in the natural way; had he been, that is, the fruit of Mary's marriage with

incarnation: *εἰπὲ οὖν θεοτόκον τὴν παρθένον, καὶ μὴ λέγε θεοδόχον· μᾶλλον δὲ λέγε θεοδόχον καὶ θεοτόκον.* Serm. in Nativ. Christi, 5. See also his treatise *de Incarnatione Dei Verbi*.

³ In the passage referred to, Origen makes the heretics speak for themselves; *καὶ ἡμεῖς ὁμολογοῦμεν ὅτι διὰ Μαρίας, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκ Μαρίας· ὥσπερ γὰρ ὕδωρ διὰ σωλῆνος διέρχεται, μηδὲν προσλαμβάνων, οὕτω καὶ ὁ Λόγος, διὰ Μαρίας, καὶ οὐκ ἐκ Μαρίας.*

her husband ; for then He would have partaken of the corruption of that fallen nature which He came to cure and save, and would, as a necessary consequence, have been unable to present a sinless offering for it. But, as He was miraculously conceived without the intervention of a human father, “so He was not infected with this natural corruption, which was no more than was necessary to fit His human nature for the personal union with the divine, and to qualify Him to take away the sins of the world.”

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See Hors-
ley's Ser-
mon, p. 79.

Horbery's
Serm. v. 144.

Whilst the Gnostics, and their successors the Arians, were thus refusing to the Holy Virgin her true honour, by denying that she was the privileged instrument of bringing into the world God manifest in the flesh, they were unconsciously paving the way for a violent and mischievous reaction. If, on the one hand, philosophy was anxious to detract from the Virgin's real dignity, so, on the other, superstition did not scruple to derogate from the honour of the Godhead, by ascribing to her attributes and powers which belong to Him, and Him alone. There were those who were willing to forget the words of St. Augustine, “Let not the worship of the dead be any part of our religion; they ought so to be honoured that we may imitate them, but not worship them.” There were those, who were willing to pay more than this honour to the Virgin Mary: and the accumulated heresies, which succeeding ages have heaped up on this point, have fixed an indelible blot on one branch of Christ's Catholic Church.

August. de
verâ Relig.
ch. 55.

For example,—the Scriptures “conclude all under sin,” making no exception in favour of any created being. But the council of Trent declares, in its fifth session, that it is not the intention of the Church of Rome, “to include in this decree, which treats of original sin, the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, the mother of God.” But it is too clear to require argument to prove it, that, if she was born in the natural way, she must have inherited the corrupt nature bequeathed to us by Adam, and so must have required a Redeemer, in the same manner as the rest of mankind⁴.

Gal. iii. 22.
Sess. v. dec.
de Pecc.
Orig. 5.

Nor is this all: one of the best-known services of the Roman Catholic Church, “the Litany of Loretto,” com-

⁴ The sinlessness of the Virgin, is a doctrine which the Church of Rome holds in common with the Mohammedans. See Sale's Koran, ch. iii. note 36.

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mences with the following anthem, "We fly to thy patronage, O holy mother of God: despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin."

In the same office, amongst many other titles bestowed upon her, she, the dead Virgin Mary, is addressed as "Virgin most powerful, Virgin most merciful, comfortress of the afflicted, help of Christians, queen of angels, and refuge of the afflicted." In the selfsame service Christ Himself is addressed in words of no higher meaning,— "assured refuge of all afflicted wretches."

In another manual of spiritual exercises and instructions, sanctioned, but a few years ago, by the Vicar Apostolic of the London district, we have, in a single hymn to the Virgin, passages which ascribe to her, in one place, the office of the Saviour; in another, the influence of the Holy Ghost:—

"Loosen the sinner's bands, all evils drive away;
Bring light unto the blind, and for all graces pray:"

and again,—

Garden of
the Soul.

"O pure and spotless maid, whose meekness all surpass'd,
Our lusts and passions quell, and make us mild and chaste."

So, too, in the Breviary we find the following prayer, amongst many others, addressed to the Virgin: "Blessed mother of God, Mary, perpetual virgin, the temple of the Lord, the holy place of the Holy Spirit, thou alone without example hast pleased our Lord Jesus Christ. Pray for the people, mediate for the clergy, intercede for the female sex who are under a vow."

Brev. Rom.
Pars Vern.

Hundreds of similar passages might be adduced from works of good repute in the Roman Church⁵: these have been selected from manuals in use at the present hour.

⁵ The Psalter of Bonaventura, the "Seraphic Doctor," is well known. In this work, he has taken each of the one hundred and fifty Psalms, and so changed the commencement of every one, as to address them, not as the inspired Psalmist did, to the Lord Jehovah, but to the Virgin Mary.

The song of the three children, the canticle of Zacharias, the Te Deum, and the Athanasian Creed, are similarly perverted: in the latter, the Assumption of the Virgin is specified as one of the points to be believed, on pain of losing all hope of salvation. See Tyler's *Primitive Worship*, p. 358—365. The third part of this interesting work is entirely devoted to the consideration of the worship paid to the Virgin Mary.

Alas! that we should have to say, that in countries where public opinion goes hand in hand with, instead of opposing, these impieties, proofs start up before us and around us, that superstition, when left to run riot in all the luxuriance of a fanciful imagination, will not scruple to pay a worship to the Virgin, at least akin to, if not identified with, idolatry. Can we see votaries bowed down before the graven image of the Virgin in the house of God; can we behold their tears, and their impassioned gestures, and then believe that the poor and uneducated will or can make the clear distinction, which the Romish Church professes to make, between the image as the object of worship, and as the emblem of that which is invisible⁶? Can we witness the statue of the Virgin borne aloft on the shoulders of ecclesiastics, and carried in solemn procession through the streets; can we see men, women, children, of all ranks and ages, on their knees kissing the very ground before it, and then be simple enough to think, that the gulf is so very wide, between idolatry in principle and idolatry in practice⁷?

We need not, and we should not speak irreverently of her, whom an angel's voice hailed as "highly favoured of God," and whom her own prophetic lips pronounced "blessed amongst all generations;" but we should be indeed insensible to the duty and the privilege of holding fast the purity of Gospel truth, were we to abstain from protesting, without reserve, against any species of adoration paid to one, who, in spite of all the fictions invented respecting her birth or her assumption, in order to gloss over idolatry, did not differ in nature from any other woman. The invocation of the Virgin is an invasion of the rights of Him who is our only Mediator and Advocate; and the worship of the Virgin tends "to undermine the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, and rob Him of His title to our adoration."

See Tyler's
Primitive
Worship,
p. 272.

Hawkins's
Bampt. Lect.
notes, p. 352.
See also
Hey's Div.
Lect. iv. 22.
20. note 5.

⁶ "It seems proper," says Dr. Hey, "to mention the Popish distinction between *λατρεία*, and *δουλεία*, and *ὑπερδουλεία*. The Romanists, wishing to avoid the charge of idolatry, have said that there are different sorts of adoration: *λατρεία* is that which is due to God; *δουλεία* is that which is due to man; *ὑπερδουλεία* that which is due to Christ in His human nature, or to His mother, the Blessed Virgin."—Hey's Lectures, iv. 22. 13.

⁷ That this statement is not overcharged, any one can testify who is at all familiar with Roman Catholic countries. I have frequently been an eye-witness of similar scenes in the streets of Naples.

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We know not how far it may be permitted for the spirits of the departed, to watch the progress of those who still wend their way along the path of their appointed pilgrimage; we know not how far it is given to that cloud of disembodied witnesses, of whom the Apostle speaks, to survey our deeds and hear our words: but, if such unearthly converse and supervision be allowed, how must the pure gentle spirit of the blessed Virgin mourn to behold the follies, the blasphemies, yea, the idolatries enacted in and for her name! Thus, in truth, the prophecy of good old Simeon would be again accomplished; the sword would pierce through her soul indeed, could she witness the dishonour done to her Son through the mistaken adoration offered to herself.

Heb. xii. 1.

Luke ii. 35.

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ACTS x. 38.

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power : who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ; for God was with Him.”

As the chief object of the creed was, to put forth only those fundamental doctrines, which were in danger of being contravened by the early heretics, as well as to fix the attention of the faithful upon a few leading points of Christian instruction, we find, that the notice of our Saviour's life is confined to the simple declaration of the mode of its commencement and its close. LECTURE XVIII.

The facts of that life were matters of history, not of controversy ; and, though disputes ran high, as to the immediate power that called into action the many wonders with which it was characterized, even infidelity itself was compelled to confess that they actually took place.

But it falls within the legitimate province of the commentator on the creed, to enlarge upon those points which are therein merely asserted : and thus we proceed to take a slight sketch of the leading incidents in our Saviour's life and ministry.

The little town of Bethlehem was the prophesied scene of the Messiah's birth ; and there, unattended by any of those manifestations, with which we might have expected the King of Israel and the God Incarnate to have been revealed,—there, under circumstances of poverty and distress, did the Virgin Mother usher into the world her holy burthen. Micah v. 2.

We have already seen, how anxious were the Jews for the coming of that “Desire of all nations,” which would be to them, as they believed, the morning star of many a day of conquest and of vengeance. We have seen, too, that Gentile Haggai ii. 7.

LECTURE nations were partakers, if not in their anxieties, at least in
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Lect. xvii.
 p. 185.

The first recorded incident in the life of Christ is connected with this belief. There were certain wise men in the East, called in the Scripture narrative Magi, who, as we gather from their subsequent actions, were watching for the signs, which prophecy had pointed out, as indicative of Messiah's advent. How they became possessed of a knowledge of the one true God; what were the peculiarities of their religious faith; how far based upon revealed or traditionary truth; how far tinged with the idolatrous practices around them, it were vain in this remote age to determine. Thus much we may safely conclude: that they were men of distinguished piety, worshippers of Jehovah, and possessed of a considerable knowledge of prophecy. It seems probable, that their information was handed down as a traditionary treasure from Daniel, (who was himself not only one of their class, but even their president during his residence in Babylon,) and kept alive amongst them in its purity by God's special intervention.

Dan. v. 11.

Their attention seems mainly to have been arrested by the prophecy of Balaam, which spoke of the "Star that should come out of Jacob," in conjunction with the "Sceptre which should rise out of Israel." They saw the expected sign: the Star was at once their signal and their guide; they set forth with the pious intent of bringing offerings to the Infant King; and the very costliness of their presents affords some colour to the old tradition of the Church, that these Gentile worshippers were princes in their own land: a notion founded upon a prophecy, which, though primarily referring to Solomon, has undoubtedly a secondary meaning relating to the Messiah¹; "The kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts."

Num. xxiv.
 17.

See Bp.
 Horne, in
 loc.

Ps. lxxii. 10.

When they came to Jerusalem, they went to Herod, who was at that time on the throne, with the natural question, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His Star in the East, and are come to worship Him."

Matt. ii. 2.

¹ Bp. Horsley, in his "Critical Notes on the Psalms," vol. ii. p. 191, says, "that the Jewish expositors universally refer this Psalm to the Messiah."

Well might Herod, "and all Jerusalem with him," be "troubled" at these tidings! Jerusalem, with joyous expectation, that the yoke was slipping from off her shoulders,—Herod, Edomite, infidel, and tyrant, with the fear that his day of dominion was past, his hour of retribution come. The chief priests and Scribes are summoned to tell, where Christ should be born: they answer from the prophecies, "in Bethlehem." Thither the wise men went, being first desired of Herod (whose cunning seems on this occasion to have deserted him), to return and tell him, when and where they had found the royal Babe, that he might "come and worship Him also."

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Matt. ii. 3.

Ib. 5.

Ib. 8.

They were not staggered, at finding the subject of prophecy for four thousand years, the King of Israel, the Holy One of God, manifested under such humble, and, to an Eastern mind, such degrading circumstances: they were not turned from their purpose at discovering Him, whom they came thus far to worship, the inmate of a sorry hut, with every trace of poverty and wretchedness around Him: they did not pause to question His pretensions, they did not strive to reconcile contradictions; they poured forth their gifts, "they fell down and worshipped Him²."

Ib. 11.

Instead of returning to Herod, they were warned of God to depart into their own country another way. Baffled in his purpose of securing the person of Him, whom he looked upon as a rival to his pretensions, he put to death all the male children in Bethlehem³, who might probably have been born since the time, mentioned by the Magi as that of the first appearance of the star; and thus, he not only unconsciously fulfilled an old-standing prophecy, but, by leaving Jesus the sole survivor of all children born at Bethlehem at or near the

Jer. xxxi. 15.
Dan. ix.
25, 26.

² With reference to the offerings of the Magi, Irenæus says, that "they shewed, by the gifts which they offered, who it was that was worshipped: myrrh, to shew that it was He who was to die and be buried for mankind; gold, to shew that He was a king, of whose kingdom there is no end; but frankincense, to shew that He was God, who in Judah was well known, and manifest to those who did not seek Him."—Iren. l. iii. c. 9. s. 2. See also Clem. Alex. Pæd. ii. 8. Orig. cont. Cels. i. 60.

³ "From two years old and under." This date would seem to indicate, that the offerings of the Magi were not made during the first year of our Saviour's birth: or we must conclude, that the star appeared to them some time before they came to Jerusalem. See Lightfoot, Harm. Evang. p. i. s. 7.

LECTURE XVIII. time predicted by Daniel, he was the means of adding another link to the chain of evidence, that identified Him with the Messiah: and it is observable, that, at this period, no impostor or enthusiast took advantage of the then excited state of public feeling, to proclaim himself the Messiah. The reason is obvious: the Jews would have demanded proof of his birth at Bethlehem, according to the prophecy; and the fact of the massacre there would have nipped all false pretensions in the bud.

Herod's cruelty is the more remarkable, when we remember, that, as he was now past seventy years of age, the pretensions of the royal Babe (even had they been of the worldly character that he and the Jews expected) could never have personally affected him; and his savage tyranny to different members of his own family precludes the idea, that he thus added to his many murders, for the interest of his successors.

The object of his search was already far beyond his reach. Joseph had been warned by an angel, to flee with the young child and his mother into Egypt, there to tarry until the Lord recalled him; and the costly offerings of the wise men appear to have been a special intervention, on the part of Providence, to furnish support for this holy but humble family during their sojourn in a foreign land.

The sacred narrative is very concise respecting our Saviour's earlier years: it merely tells us of a few simple facts; that He came from Egypt with His parents, and went with them to Nazareth, the original home of Joseph; that He "was subject to them," that He "grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him;" and that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." One remarkable incident is recorded, as a proof of His more than ordinary attainments. It was a law with the Jews, that all their males should go up annually to Jerusalem, to celebrate the three solemn festivals of their nation. When Jesus was twelve years old, His parents took Him with them upon one of these occasions, desirous, doubtless, to embrace the earliest opportunity, of making Him acquainted with the ordinances of the law. As this too was the usual age, when the Jews began more fully to instruct their children, and to inure them to fasting and other legal

See Joseph.
Antiq. l. xvi.
c. 7. 17.

Matt. ii. 14.

Matt. ii. 20.
23.

Luke ii. 40.

Ib. 52.

Exod. xxiii.
15—17.
Lev. xxiii.
Deut. xvi.

Elsley's
Annot. in
loc.

observances, it is probable, that His parents then first brought Him to the passover, and presented Him to the congregation in that ceremony, which is, to this day, analogous to the Christian rite of confirmation. At the close of the feast they commenced their journey homeward. Travelling in a large company, as is the custom of Asiatics at the present day, Jesus, who “tarried behind in Jerusalem,” was not missed until nightfall, when the several families, who might have been separated during the day, collected their scattered members. His parents returned to seek Him: “they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions:” they “were astonished at His understanding and answers:” for, though it was both the custom and the privilege of the youngest Jew, to propose to his elders questions concerning the law, we may well imagine, that it was not so very common, for a child of twelve years old, to be so learned in the law, as to be able to enter into theological arguments with those, whose duty it was to explain its peculiarities and to expound its difficulties.

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Luke ii. 43.

Ib. 46.

Ib. 47.

Elsley's
Annot. in
loc.

Still time drew on, and still the Jews were tributaries to Rome, exercising their religious ceremonies more by sufferance, than by right. The seventy weeks of Daniel were fulfilled, and still there were no signs of their promised Redeemer; when, suddenly, their expectations were aroused by the appearance and preaching of one, who, in addition to several miraculous circumstances attending his birth, some thirty years before, united the long-forgotten austerities, and even dress of their old prophets, to extraordinary sanctity of manner, and purity of life and conversation. This man was John the Baptist. He openly declared, that “the kingdom of heaven,” the reign, that is, of the Messiah, was “at hand:” he took his station at the ford of Bethabara, a spot endeared and even hallowed to the Jews, as that where their forefathers, under the guidance of Joshua, had crossed the Jordan, and first set foot upon the land of promise. It was here that John preached to them the novel doctrine of repentance, and forsaking of sin, as a necessary condition of their admission into the privileges of the kingdom of heaven; and prescribed, as a test of their sincerity, the rite of baptism, which, though customary among the Jews, had never hitherto been enjoined

Luke i.

57—80.

Matt. iii. 4.

Ib. 2.

John i. 28.

Wells's

Geog. vol. ii.

p. 162.

Josh. ii. 7.

23. iii. 16.

LECTURE XVIII. as necessary to the Hebrew of Hebrews, but had been confined to the persons of Gentile proselytes. Multitudes flocked to hear him: the Pharisee, the Sadducee, the publican, the soldier, the harlot, all crowded round the desert preacher; and, in the singularly excited state of the whole body of the Jews at that period, we are not surprised to find, that "all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not."

Horne's
Introd. vol.
iii. p. 3. c. 2.
s. 2.

Luke iii. 7.
15.

The fame of the prophet spread; and, as public opinion thus pointed to him, as one who might possibly be the Christ, (however ill his external appearance accorded with their conceptions of his character,) a deputation of priests and Levites was sent from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who art thou?"

John i. 19.

The nature of their first hopes is evident from the Baptist's answer, "I am not the Christ." Disappointed at his denial, their next question is, "Art thou Elias?" for the prophecies of Malachi had led them to expect the personal manifestation of Elijah, before the coming of Christ; and he saith, "I am not." "Art thou that prophet?" is their third enquiry; for there was a strong belief among the Jews, that the prophet Jeremiah would return to life at or about this period; a belief, which was perfectly in accordance with the religious opinions of the Pharisees, who, during our Saviour's life, seem to have believed, that He was animated by the soul of one of their deceased prophets. John's self-denial is remarkable: he must have been conscious that in his person the spirit and power of Elias were revived, that he was "a prophet, and more than a prophet," and that, among them that were born of women, there had not arisen a greater one than himself; and yet he was unwilling to assume a character which his countrymen were desirous to put upon him, and which would instantly have invested his exhortations with an authority little short of absolute: he was content to be Messiah's messenger, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." And, when even his denial of all claim to the titles, well-nigh thrust upon him, did not set at rest the musings and suspicions of the people, he openly proclaimed himself only the forerunner of One, mightier than himself, the latchet of whose shoes he was "not worthy to unloose."

John i. 21.

Horne's
Introd.
vol. iii. p. 3.
ch. 6. s. 2.
Jos. de Bell.
Jud. i. ii.
c. 8.
Matt. xvi.
14.
Whitby and
Grotius, in
loc.

Matt. xi. 9.

Ib. 11.

John i. 23.

Luke iii. 15.

Ib. 16.

This mightier One was now preparing to enter upon His

ministry, being of the age at which the Jewish priests were permitted to exercise their holy functions, namely, thirty years. He presented Himself unto John for baptism. John, conscious of His superiority to himself, "forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" "Suffer it to be so now," is the Saviour's answer, "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." May we not conjecture, that He, who was without spot of sin Himself, submitted to a human ordinance (for such was John's baptism *) for a twofold purpose: first, that our great High Priest, when admitted into His ministerial office, should answer the type of the Levitical Priests, who were initiated by anointing and by purifications, a sort of typical baptism; and secondly, that He might set the example of fulfilling, not alone those injunctions which the strict letter of the law laid down, but also those religious observances, which the wisdom and piety of competent human authority have enjoined to be observed? Nor was this act of humble obedience left unregarded: "The heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus, we find God the Father investing God the Son with the mediatorial office, and bearing testimony to His acceptance of it; whilst God the Holy Ghost ratifies the decree of the one, and sanctifies the acceptance of the other.

Immediately after His baptism, the destined conflict with the powers of darkness began, the first-fruits of that victory over Satan, which it was Christ's eternal and prophesied purpose to accomplish. As a solemn preparation for the duties of His ministerial office, Jesus, under the guidance of the Spirit, retired from the society of men, even as the prophets of old, Moses and Elijah,—and there in the wilderness endured a fast of forty days and forty nights. The human nature of the second Adam prevailed, and He was "an hungered." During the whole period it appears that Satan was on the watch to tempt Him, hoping, perhaps, that as he

LECTURE
XVIII.
Numb. iv.
3. 47.
1 Chron.
xxiii. 3.
Matt. iii. 14.

See Light-
foot, Harm.
Evan. in loc.
Exod. xxx.
20.
Ezek. xxxvi.
25.

See Cyril.
Catech.
lec. iii. 11.
14.

Matt. iii. 16,
17.

Exod. xxiv.
18.
1 Kings
xix. 8.

Matt. iv. 2.

* "If repentance be something human, the baptism of repentance must needs be the same; or, had it been heavenly, it would give both the Holy Spirit and remission of sins."—Tertull. de Bapt. c. 10.

LECTURE XVIII. had succeeded in betraying the first man to his fall, so he might be able to mar God's counsel, by prevailing over Him who was to disannul the penal curse, the consequence of that fall. He took advantage of this appearance of infirmity, and conscious that he could not hope to gain his end, by suggesting any temptations to the grosser sins of appetite or sense, the appeal was made to the cravings of nature, and to one of the most ordinary feelings, even of God's holier children, namely, a consciousness of holiness. This last method appears to be common to each of the three points of attack; an affected doubt, on the part of Satan, whether He really was the Son of God, and a temptation to assert His legitimate claim to His Sonship, by an untimely exercise of power, which would have argued either distrust in His Father's eventual support, or impatience at His own supposed desertion. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." "Why is it," would be Satan's argument, "if you are the person you represent yourself to be, the prophesied Messiah, why is it that you are thus left pining with hunger? it is a needless trial of your faith and patience: if you have the power to deliver yourself, as you certainly must have the will, exercise that power. God cannot be angry with you for the use of that very privilege, with which you are by Him invested." It was an argument of much the same kind as that, by means of which he had prevailed over the first Adam; an insinuation of God's harshness and needless restrictions: there was no suggestion here to exercise a miracle upon a great, and therefore for the purpose a needless scale, but merely to change a stone into a loaf, that He might not perish from hunger. Our Saviour's answer is from Scripture, and a reference to the passage quoted will shew the wisdom, as well as the humility of the reply. He reminds Satan, that God suffered His chosen people to hunger, and then delivered them, that He might prove to them that they were safe under His protection, notwithstanding appearances were against it: that, as He had brought them into the wilderness, so, if they abided His time and kept their souls in patience, He would support them in it through means unknown to, but not unfelt by, them. Christ applied the argument to

Matt. iv. 3.

Himself: He, too, had no reason to question the present fitness, or to doubt the ultimate mercy of God's designs, with regard to Himself. He also might say, as did Moses to the Israelites, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

LECTURE
XVIII.
Matt. iv. 4.
Deut. viii. 3.

Unable to infuse distrust, Satan's next effort was to call forth presumption. He set the Saviour upon a pinnacle of the Temple, and urged Him, if He was the Son of God, to cast Himself down, in the sight of all the worshippers, and so to come "suddenly to His Temple;" even as the Jews expected, who would thus unanimously hail Him as their Messiah. "There can be neither danger nor impropriety in this course," would be Satan's argument, "because one of the prophecies respecting you implies that you should act thus, and promises you God's support in so doing: 'He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, . . . lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.'" Satan misquoted, and Christ corrected him, by shewing him the right application of the passage, implying indeed God's providential care, but not warranting us to rush wantonly into danger, and so to challenge the performance of a miracle for our especial deliverance:—"It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The last temptation seems to be the urging Christ to take upon Himself the office of the Messiah, without undergoing the humiliation that was before Him, and the sorrows which were in prospect. Satan would naturally endeavour to set forth the full bitterness of that cup, from which Jesus prayed afterwards to be delivered; he would dwell upon His agony, His mockings, His scourgings, His crucifixion; and his argument then would be, "If you are to undergo all this, surely you cannot be that beloved Son, in whom God is well pleased! is it a mark of His pleasure, or of His affection, to ordain that you should be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief? why take up this view of a suffering Messiah, when the prophecies justify you in becoming a triumphant, a glorious, an all-powerful king?" Satan bade Him look from "an exceeding high mountain" on "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them:" "listen to Him who calls Himself your Father," he would urge, "and you have nothing

Mal. iii. 1.

Matt. iv. 6.
Ps. xci. 11,
12.

Deut. vi. 16.

LECTURE but contempt, misery, and death, before you; listen to me,
XVIII. and 'all this power will I give Thee and the glory of them:

for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I
Luke iv. 6, 7. give it. If Thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be Thine."

Jesus was indignant at this suggestion, which went directly
to rob God of all His honour, and said unto him, "Get thee
hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord
Matt. iv. 10. Deut. x. 20. thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Thus Christ, "who was in all points tempted like as we
Heb. iv. 15. are," encountered and conquered the three great engines of
human temptation, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the
1 John ii. eyes, and the pride of life;" and St. Paul tells us, that it was
16. for us He submitted to this fearful trial, as the willing sub-
stitute for sinners: "in all things," says the Apostle, "it
behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He
might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things per-
taining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the
people; for in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted,
He is able to succour them that are tempted."

After our blessed Lord had thus ended His first conflict
with the powers of darkness, He went into Galilee, and com-
menced His wonderful career of miracles, by changing water
John ii. into wine at a wedding-feast at Cana, an act of kind humanity
1—11. towards one, who probably could ill afford the exercise of
such extensive hospitality, as was customary at these domestic
festivals of the Jews. His stay in that part of the country
appears to have been short; and from Capernaum, the city
where He usually dwelt, He went up to Jerusalem to the
Ib. 12, 13. Passover.

His first public act was to go to the Temple, and there,
indignant at its profanation by those who sat in the outer
court, to sell sheep and oxen for sacrifice, and doves for the
offerings of the poor, as well as to exchange money for the
convenience of the worshippers, (abuses, practised to a great
extent at the time of the Passover, when Jerusalem was
thronged with strangers from all parts of the country,) He
took a scourge of small cords, and drove them all out of the
Temple. It is remarkable, that these unholy traffickers, who
made the house of prayer "a house of merchandize" and "a
den of thieves," submitted to the authority of an unarmed
John ii. 16.
Matt. xxi.
13.

humble man, without at the instant presuming to question it. They were evidently overawed by the majestic demeanour of Jesus; and it is probable too, that the fame of the miracles which He had already wrought had preceded Him, that attention was called to His person, and that, even at this early period, some suspicions were afloat, that the prophet of Nazareth might possibly be the Christ.

It was probably about this period, that John the Baptist was cast into prison at the instigation of Herodias, who was incensed at the boldness with which he reproved her incestuous and adulterous intercourse with Herod Antipas; a termination to his ministry possibly designed by Providence, that men might not halt between two opinions, and doubt which were the Christ,—John, or Jesus.

Matt. xiv.
3—11.

Our Saviour's public assumption of His ministerial office is to be dated from John's imprisonment: "from that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Galilee was the first scene of the wonders that He wrought in attestation of His divine authority. He went about from place to place, from synagogue to synagogue, teaching, and "preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." The lunatic, the possessed with devils, the palsied, the leper, the crippled, the lame, all were healed; the maimed had their limbs restored, the very dead were raised to life, five thousand were fed with a few loaves and fishes, He walked on the waters of the sea of Galilee, He hushed the tempest, He calmed the winds and waves: a few instances only are dwelt upon by the Evangelists, as specimens of the rest; for, as the Apostle John declares, if all were recorded that Jesus did, "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

Matt. iv. 12.

Ib. 17.

Ib. 23.

John xxi.
25.

A remarkable circumstance is mentioned, as connected with this part of our Saviour's history. When Herod heard the tale of all these marvels, unable to account for them in any other manner, and ignorant that a second prophet had arisen more powerful than John whom he had beheaded, Sadducee as he was, and therefore no believer in the resurrection, he exclaimed in his first fear, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead:" an observation which

Matt. xiv. 2.

LECTURE proves, that the voice of conscience cannot always be stifled,
 XVIII. even by the most hardened infidel.

See Lect.
 xvi. p. 178.

We are not surprised, then, that miracle thus crowded upon miracle should have made many believe on Him. Some said with Nicodemus, "No man can do these miracles, except God be with him:" others asked, "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" When the Scribes and Pharisees said one to another, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles," and were anxious to explain them away, by referring them to the power of Beelzebub, and by calling Jesus an impostor and a sinner, not a prophet,—there were those who answered, "Can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?"

John iii. 2.
 John vii. 31.
 John xi. 47.
 Matt. ix. 34.
 Mark iii. 22.
 Luke xi. 15.
 John ix. 24.
 vii. 12.
 John ix. 16.

His followers, as we might expect, soon became numerous: some attended His steps from gratitude; others from affection; many, from a belief that Israel's Deliverer had at last arrived, and that in the person of Jesus they had found the Christ. This opinion would naturally be strengthened, by the peculiar adaptation of several of His miracles to their preconceived ideas of the mission of Messiah. "This," they would argue, "this is indeed one in whom we can trace the elements of an irresistible commander. We cannot suffer from hunger in the longest march, for He can feed thousands with the bread of one. Defeat is impossible: if we are sick, He can heal us; if we are maimed or wounded in battle, He can restore us; nay, if we are slain, He can bid us live again."

From the multitudes who followed Him, He, "who knew what was in man," selected twelve, whom He called Apostles, to be, in the first instance, the chosen witnesses of His miracles, and the sharers of His counsels; and, subsequently, the champions of His doctrines. It was, probably, to establish their confidence in Him and His divine commission, that He invested them, for a season, with the self-same power that they saw Him exercise. He sent them to preach, unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the glories of the coming kingdom. That none might doubt, or gainsay the authority with which they spake, He bade them "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." At another time, He gave a commission, nearly similar, to seventy of His disciples, whom in like manner He sent out, two and two, as

Matt. x. 8.
 Luke ix. 2.

aids to each other's labours, and witnesses to each other's success.

LECTURE
XVIII.

Luke x.
1-16.

One point connected with the election of the Apostles is too remarkable to be left unnoticed. They were chosen, not as the Jews might have expected the privileged companions of the Messiah would have been, from the learned, the noble, and the influential of the land, but from the humblest and most despised classes. Their very country was hateful to the true-born Israelite, for they were, to a man, Galileans. There was no man amongst them like Moses, "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians;" no one as Aaron, "the saint of the Lord," and a prophet among the people; no one like these two presiding ministers of the old covenant. But there was the unlettered fisherman, the odious publican, and, as some were relatives of our Lord Himself, there were also, probably, the humble artisan, and the rude mechanic. Strange delegates these, to remodel the religions of the world: and the difficulty with which they entered into our Saviour's views, their little jealousies, their frequent blindness to His counsels, and their general misapprehension of the real nature of His mission, in spite of His own repeated lessons on that very head, are sufficient evidences, that they were not only not in advance of the prejudices of their countrymen, but that they were deeply imbued with them: humanly speaking, they were the last men who were fitted for the extraordinary task they were destined one day to accomplish. Hereafter, we shall see them under a different character.

Acts vii. 22.

Ps. cvi. 16.

Exod. vii. 1.

LECTURE XIX.

MATT. xvi. 21.

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”

LECTURE XIX. } THE Apostles had been the witnesses of so many wonderful works performed by Jesus, that, though they were as yet unable to comprehend the kind of deliverance He was to work for Israel, still they appear to have entertained little doubt but that in Him was fulfilled the prediction given to Moses, and that He was, of a truth, “that Prophet that should come into the world.” Thus, after enquiring of them, what were the current opinions of the Jews respecting Him, and receiving for answer, that some said He was John the Baptist risen from the dead, others Elijah, others Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets reappearing upon earth,—He demanded of them, “But whom say ye that I am?” Peter stood forward as spokesman for the rest, and doubtless uttered their conviction as well as his own, when he said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Deut. xviii.
15—19.
Acts iii.
20—24.
John vi. 14.

Matt. xvi.
13—16.

From that time forth, from the hour when His Apostles declared that they not only regarded Him as a Prophet sent from God, but “as the Glory of His people Israel,” He began to set them right as to the real end of His appearing in the flesh; “to remove the prejudices in which they had been educated, and to shew them plainly, what that deliverance was, which the Messiah was to work; for whom, and by what means it was to be effected. It was time to extinguish their hopes of sharing in the splendours of an earthly kingdom, and to prepare and fortify their minds against all that ‘contradiction of sinners’ which they, with their master, were in this world destined to endure.”

Luke ii. 32.

See Van
Mildert's
Ser. 5, vol.
ii. p. 94, 95.

Horsley's
Ser. xix.
p. 111.

He shewed them the necessity of His sufferings,—how that LECTURE
XIX.
 “the Son of Man *must* suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain,” adding, as some consolation after this astounding, and to them unaccountable, announcement, “and be raised the third day.” It was a bitter disappointment to those, who from day to day were looking for that hour when their beloved Master should cast off His garb of humiliation, and come “glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength;” and the earnest remonstrance of Peter, whose mind was filled with jealousy for what he conceived his Master’s honour, shews us how unable they were, to withhold the expression of their surprise and sorrow. It was evidently a part of our Saviour’s merciful counsel, to satisfy the minds of His Apostles on this head, to do something more than simply declare that “It behoveth Christ to suffer:” He shewed them how His sufferings and His glory were identified; and how the ushering in of the covenant of grace was connected with both.

Luke ix. 22.
Matt. xvi. 21.

Is. lxiii. i.
Matt. xvi. 22.

Luke xxiv.
46.

This was apparently done at His transfiguration; a mysterious scene, of which the disciples, Peter, James, and John, were the chosen and only witnesses. He took them apart into a mountain, and there He “was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared Moses and Elias talking with Him,” who appeared in glory, and “spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.” “A bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.” “And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.” “Moses and Elias were evidently on this occasion representatives of the Law and the Prophets; and their reappearance from the world of spirits, to hold this conference with Him, to whom the Law and the Prophets had given witness, was an indication of the harmony and connexion of the Gospel with the preceding dispensations.” The disciples were witnesses to the testimony, given to our Lord’s supremacy by the appearance of these illustrious visitants: they heard them converse with Christ respecting His own death, and thus must have been assured of its

Matt. xvii.
2, 3.

Luke ix. 31.

Matt. xvii. 5.

Luke ix. 36.

Van Mil-
dert’s Ser.
5, vol. ii.
p. 95.

LECTURE necessity, in seeing that the departed Prophets, in their
 {XIX.} spiritual nature, were fully conscious of it. Moses and Elias did not deprecate His death,—why then should they? The glorified appearance of the Prophets and the Christ was mercifully intended to reconcile the Apostles to an event, which, as far as their beloved Master was concerned, was destined to be the prelude to a resurrection, that should render it a state of abiding glory; whilst the departure of Moses and Elias, leaving Christ alone, would seem to indicate to them the cessation of the Law and the Prophets, as having accomplished their appointed end,—the yielding of the covenant of works to the dominion of the covenant of grace.

“The impression made upon the Apostles by this extraordinary incident was neither weak nor transient. It was treasured up in their remembrance as a transaction of high and awful importance, to be in due time more perfectly understood and more generally made known. In the meanwhile, it seems greatly to have sustained their own hope and confidence. If it did not reconcile them to the thoughts of those bitter sufferings which their blessed Master was to undergo, it at least repressed their murmurings, and silenced their doubts, whenever the unwelcome subject was renewed. They found that there was some mysterious *necessity* in the case, which they dared not explore; and the high conceptions they had now formed of their Lord withheld them from any further expressions of mistrust or offence.”

Van Mildert, ut
 supra, p. 103.

The effect of this and other proofs of our Saviour's extraordinary power and dignity is visible in the confiding affections of the Apostles. The Jews had endeavoured to stone Him for what they deemed blasphemy, the assertion of His equality with the Father; they had threatened with excommunication all who should “confess that He was Christ;” and the Apostles felt, that, surrounded as He was with enemies on the watch to practise against His life, death would be, humanly speaking, the inevitable consequence of His again entering Jerusalem.

John v. 18.
 x. 30, 31.
 ix. 22.

But His time was at hand: Lazarus, one whom Jesus loved, was sick and dying. His sisters sent to tell Him, in the hope that, as He had done so much for strangers, He

John xi. 1.

would work a miracle for the restoration of His friend. LECTURE XIX.
 Jesus tarried on His journey at the tidings; and it was not John xi. 3.
 until after his death that He said to His disciples, "Let us Ib. 6.
 go into Judæa again." They were astonished at the proposal. Ib. 7.
 "Master," is their answer, "the Jews of late sought to stone
 Thee, and goest Thou thither again?" When Jesus per- Ib. 8.
 sisted in His intention, "Let us also go," said Thomas to
 his fellow-disciples, "that we may die with Him." They Ib. 16.
 went up to Bethany, where Lazarus and his sisters lived, a
 little village scarcely two miles distant from Jerusalem. They
 found that Lazarus had been four days buried; a time quite Ib. 17.
 long enough (as we have seen) in that hot country, for the
 work of putrefaction to have made considerable progress: Lect. xvi.
 they found the sisters weeping and surrounded by many of p. 178.
 their relations and kinsfolk, who came to console them for (note.)
 their loss. "Lord," is the touching appeal of each to Him, John xi. 19.
 "if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;" and Ib. 21.
 even the Jews, many of whom had witnessed His miracles,
 said among themselves, "Could not this man, which opened
 the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should
 not have died?" So great was the Saviour's sympathy for the Ib. 37.
 anguish that He beheld, that, conscious though He was how
 soon their tears would be exchanged for joy, "Jesus wept." Ib. 35.
 They surround the burial-place:—"It was a cave, and a
 stone lay upon it." Jesus commands the stone to be re- Ib. 38.
 moved; and the surprised remark of Martha, "Lord, by this
 time he stinketh," is a proof how little the sisters, who best Ib. 39.
 knew Jesus, were prepared for the miracle that was at hand.
 When He had publicly given thanks to God, that He had
 heard His appeal to Him for an attestation to His divine com-
 mission, "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth: Ib. 41.
 and he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with Ib. 43.
 grave-clothes." He was restored to his own; and, if the Ib. 44.
 tradition preserved by Epiphanius may be believed, he
 lived for thirty years after having thus been raised from the
 dead. Epiph. Hær.
l. ii. tom. 2.
s. 34.

We find that this miracle led to important results: many
 of the Jews, who were witnesses of the power that Jesus
 thus exercised over the buried and even corrupted dead,
 believed on Him as the Christ: whilst others, as unable as

LECTURE the rest to deny the fact, but remembering the interpretation
 XIX. which their rulers had put upon all His miracles, "went
 their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus
 Matt. ix. 34.
 John xi. 46. had done."

It appears that the report of this miracle, instead of arresting their attention, and inducing them dispassionately to examine the claims of Jesus to the character of the Messiah, served only to increase their rage against Him. They gathered a council, and, after expressing their selfish fear that the people would take Him by force and make Him a king, and so provoke the Romans to take away both their place and nation, "from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death; and gave commandment, that if any man knew where He were, he should shew it, that they might take Him." Jesus, in the meanwhile, retired with His disciples to a little city named Ephraim, and there abode until six days before the Passover, the destined period of His being offered up as that great Sacrifice, of which the Paschal lamb had hitherto been the type.

It is important to mark the mixed feeling with which our Saviour was at this time regarded. His Apostles, together with some even of the chief rulers, who were not so much blinded by prejudice as to be insensible to the many miracles that He had wrought, although they were afraid to confess their convictions, believed on Him as the Christ,—expected, that is, that, in some wonderful manner, He would even yet triumph over the malice of His foes, and restore to Israel His long lost but not forgotten kingdom: and there was Lazarus, a living witness of His power,—crowds coming from Jerusalem to see the man who had been raised from the dead, and many believing because they saw and heard him.

The rulers, as a body, were still unwilling to believe; they could not, they would not, part with their dreams of earthly grandeur: their hearts were hardened; the avenues of grace were closed; they had sinned against the Holy Ghost; they refused to admit the evidence of their senses; it was with them, even as with the doomed monarch of Egypt, each fresh miracle served only to add to their indignation, and to whet the appetite of their revenge.

The festival of the Passover was at hand, and Jerusalem was, in consequence, filled with worshippers from every part of the country. Many of these had doubtless been eye-witnesses of the miracles of Jesus; others, again, had been benefited by them, either personally, or in their friends and families; whilst almost all would have heard of the great Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. Anxious, then, as they were to find some means of putting Him to death, they dreaded an outbreak of the multitude, for they knew His popularity, and feared it: "not on the feast day," they said, "lest there be an uproar among the people." But there was a directing arm above, of which they thought but little, that crumbles like frost-work the fairest devices of man. An incident occurred, which proved to them that they had no time to lose; that one of the two must gain the ascendancy, Christ or the Council.

LECTURE
XIX.

John xii. 19.

Matt. xxvi.
5.

We have before seen, that the leading prophecies respecting the Messiah were, more or less familiar, to the great body of the Jewish people. There was one, which, from its very singularity, was well calculated to attract a more than common degree of attention. It was one by Zechariah, describing the manner in which their expected King should come, to take possession of His own: it ran thus; "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Great, beyond all question, was the Apostles' joy, and high their expectations, when their Master took this prophecy to Himself, ordered them to procure an ass and its colt, pointed out the exact place where they were to be found, and dictated the very words they were to say unto the owners. There was now no more concealment, no more avoiding of the open or the secret enemy: "they brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set Him thereon; and a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way." Nor was this outbreak of enthusiasm unaccountable, when compared with their former coldness. Peculiarly circumstanced as were the Jews at this time, public attention would naturally have been directed to

Lect. xvi.
p. 176.

Zech. ix. 9.

Matt. xxi.
1—3.

Ib. 7, 8.

LECTURE
XIX.

any one, who should enter Jerusalem in the manner described by the prophet. How much more, then, would their feelings be excited, when they saw the prophecy taken up by Him who, hitherto, had shewn Himself anxious to retire from the public gaze; by Him, who, when they before desired to make Him a king by force, withdrew Himself from their notice; by Him, to whom the public attention had been turned by a three years' career of miracle and teaching!

John vi. 15.

It was soon noised abroad that Jesus was on His way to the holy city: not, as before, a lone and humble wanderer, but coming after the fashion of the ancient kings and leaders in the palmy days of Judah; coming, even as the prophet declared Messiah should arrive. Jerusalem poured forth her multitudes: it is no marvel that all,—disciples, people, strangers,—should deem their anxieties at an end, their bonds snapped asunder, their long reign of supremacy begun; no marvel that they should rejoice, and “praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;” no marvel that they should spread their garments in the way, tear down the branches from the palm trees, to cast them in His path, and thus hail His advance with the honours that were usually paid to an oriental monarch. The enthusiasm of the people was not, at that time, to be checked through any fear, nor to be damped by any infidelity of their priests and rulers. The loud shout of royal welcome burst from every lip: the very children joined in the stirring cry, “Hosanna to the Son of David;” “Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord;” “Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.” It was in vain that some of the Pharisees amongst the multitude endeavoured to allay the excitement of the people; they appealed to Jesus, “Master, rebuke thy disciples.” Hitherto Jesus had repressed every popular movement in His favour, and had often enjoined silence on those on whom He had conferred miraculous benefits. But now His reply to their request is, “I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”

Luke xix.
37.

Matt. xxi. 9.

John xii. 13.
Luke xix.
38.

Matt. viii. 4.
Mark viii.
26.
Luke v. 14.
viii. 56.
Luke xix.
40.

Ib. 41, 42.

Such was our Lord's triumphant progress towards the holy city; over which He wept, as perceiving that she knew not then the things which belonged unto her peace. “And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved,

saying, Who is this?" "This," replied the multitude, "this is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." More than a prophet in that hour was Jesus deemed by most: for when He went into the temple, and, a second time, cast out them that profaned it with their unholy merchandize, no resistance was made to His proceedings; nor until the morrow, when the popular excitement had a little subsided, did even the chief priests and elders venture to ask, "By what authority doest Thou these things, and who gave Thee this authority?"

LECTURE
XIX.
Matt. xxi.
10, 11.

The belief of the people, that the Messiah had at last come to take possession of His own, must have been strengthened by the miracles that succeeded these extraordinary scenes. "The blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them." And when Jesus prayed, "Father, glorify Thy name," they heard the reply from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Good reason had the Pharisees to say among themselves, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him."

Matt. xxi.
23.
Luke xx. 2.

The great aim of the Pharisees was now to undermine the popularity of Jesus. The Sadducees too laid aside, with them, their mutual animosities, and became accomplices in the endeavour to put down the influence of one, who had exposed their infidelity in no measured terms. By a series of artful questions they endeavoured to compel Him to commit Himself, as one who was either willing to give up the liberties of His country, or else to sanction an opposition to the authority of the Romans. Had they succeeded in the one case, they would have ensured His ruin with the people; in the other, they would have given Him up "to the power and authority of the governor." He put them both to silence, and so turned their arguments against themselves, that "no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask Him any more questions."

Matt. xxi.
14.
Cf. Is. xxxv.
5, 6.

John xii.
28, 29.

Ib. 19.

Matt. xxii.
15—33.

Luke xx. 20.

Matt. xxii.
34.

Ib. 46.

But there was one amongst His chosen twelve, who was willing to betray his Master to His enemies, and to enable them to apprehend Him quietly; for they dared not seize Him openly in the present temper of the people. This man was Judas Iscariot. He seems to have joined our Saviour from motives exclusively worldly, thinking it worth his while to be the companion of His obscurity for a season, in order

LECTURE to share His glory when He came to the possession of His
 {XIX.} kingdom. At Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Judas doubtless thought that his patience was now about to reap its reward, and that he, with his companions, would be elevated to the highest honours in the new dynasty. Day after day passed, and still Jesus took no further steps to assume His power as the Messiah. Judas was probably staggered in his expectations: and when Jesus renewed those announcements which had previously so much disturbed them all; when He told them, that within two days He should be betrayed and crucified; when He spake confidently of His approaching burial, and promised to His disciples hatred and persecution as the reward of their fidelity to Him, instead of the honour and supremacy they expected; the disappointed Apostle seems to have believed Him to be either an impostor, who for three years had been deceiving others, and was now conscious that the end of his career was at hand; or else an enthusiast, who thus long had been deceiving himself, and was at last beginning to open his eyes to the falsity of his pretensions. And if the remembrance of his Master's power had come across him, and made him pause awhile, to debate whether it would be profitable or expedient to betray one who might *possibly* be the Messiah,—there was always at hand the explanation of the Pharisees, who looked upon Jesus as only a more than commonly powerful sorcerer. Knowing the anxiety of the chief priests to put Him out of the way, it does seem strange, that the covetous Judas should have made so sorry a bargain for his Master's person: the traitor must have known, that their eagerness to secure Him would have enabled him to make his own terms with them. Was it to mark his contempt for the pretensions of Jesus, that he covenanted with them for thirty pieces of silver? a petty sum, but little more than seventy shillings of our money; a price established by the law as payable for a slave, or servant, when killed by a beast.

Matt. xxvi.
 15.
 Exod. xxi.
 32.
 Zech. xi. 12.

It was not long before he found the opportunity that he sought, and he instantly availed himself of it. Jesus had eaten His last passover with His disciples: and when Judas had departed on his errand, He instituted the sacrament of "the Lord's Supper," as an undying memorial of His love

for man. He had probably signified to them his intention of retiring afterwards to the garden of Gethsemane, where He frequently, as Judas knew, resorted with His disciples. LECTURE
XIX.

John xviii. 2.

Thither Jesus went, after He had warned the eleven of His approaching betrayal and death,—had shewn them the expediency of that death,—had promised them the Comforter as a more than recompense for His loss,—and after He had prayed to the Father, not only for their individual support, but for the general welfare and unity of His Church. John xiv.
—xvii.

He left His disciples at the entrance of the garden, and took with Him Peter, James, and John, who had beheld His glory at His transfiguration, as witnesses of that agony, the intensity of which was so great, that in the open air, in a night unusually cold, the sweat poured from Him, even as it had been drops of blood. It was a sorrow so heavy, that even the much-enduring Jesus thrice earnestly prayed to be delivered from it, if it were possible, consistently with the great end for which He came into the world. It could not have been the prospect of His earthly sufferings; not the fear of the mockings of the priesthood, nor the scourgings of the Romans; not the dread of the taunts of Herod, nor the revilings of the multitude; not the terror of a painful and ignominious death, that had the power to produce an agony so unutterable. There was a more awful and a more mysterious cause. Man had become the property of Satan, the prince of this world. It was agony for the Saviour, then, to repurchase this property from its owner; agony to be, even for a season, (as the destined deliverer of man from this spiritual bondage,) under the power of the prince of darkness¹; an agony from which, if it were possible, He well might pray to be delivered. The agony past, and Satan's power broken, there appeared, even as at the end of His first conflict with the enemy of man, "an angel from heaven strengthening Him." Matt. xxvi.
37.
John xviii.
18.
Luke xxii.
44.
Matt. xxv.
39—44.

Luke xxii.
43.

Scarcely was this awful scene closed, when "Judas came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves from the chief priests and elders of the people." Jesus, whose Matt. xxvi.
47.

¹ This was Bishop Jebb's view of our Saviour's agony in the garden. See Forster's Life, note, p. 607.

LECTURE thought was, even in that dreadful hour, not for Himself but
 XIX. for His disciples, enquired whom they sought; "They answered, Jesus of Nazareth." At the words, "I am He," His captors "went backward and fell to the ground." He surrendered Himself into their hands with the remark, "If ye seek Me, let these go their way."

John xviii.
4—8.

Luke xxii.
49.

John xviii.
10.
Luke xxii.
50.

Matt. xxvi.
53, 54.

Ib. 31—35.
Ib. 56.

Luke xxii.
61, 62.

His Apostles seem, at the first, to have conceived it impossible but that their Master's power would bear down all human opposition; and, few in number as they were compared with their foes, their first question is, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" Peter, who evidently on this occasion, as on many others, was the foremost, "having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear." Jesus immediately healed him, and reproved Peter for his intemperate zeal and worldly view of His character, asking him, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? but how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

The instant that He yielded Himself up, His disciples, as He had prophesied when they professed their willingness to die for Him, "all forsook Him and fled;" deeming, evidently, that His cause was now indeed hopeless. Jesus is taken bound before the high priest, followed at a distance by Peter, who seems in part to have recovered his courage, and by another disciple, probably John, who was known to the high priest, and so might hope to pass unquestioned. It seems likely that Peter's agitated appearance, and obvious interest in the fate of the prisoner, led to the suspicion that he was one of His disciples; a suspicion which his Galilean speech went far to confirm. He is taxed with it thrice, and thrice, as His Master had warned him, he denied Him, and denied Him with an oath. Jesus heard the denial; He turned and looked upon His fallen follower: the gentleness of His reproof,—the remembrance of his broken promise,—the sense of self-degradation,—was more than he could bear; "he went out and wept bitterly."

Some little time elapsed before the council could be gathered, and witnesses suborned; for even they were ashamed to be without the mockery of a formal trial. This

interval was passed by the creatures of the priesthood in LECTURE XIX. insulting their patient Victim. Some mocked and spat upon Him; some smote and buffeted Him; others blindfolded Him, then struck Him, and said, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote Thee?" At day-break, Jesus Matt. xxvi. 68. was brought before the Sanhedrim. They asked Him of His doctrine: He appealed to the publicity of His teaching, which answered for itself. The witnesses were produced; John xviii. 19—21. and though, from the very commencement of His ministry, they had been tracking his steps, and watching His every word, they could find nothing against Him; the utmost that they could do was to bring a vague and contradictory accusation, founded upon a perversion of His words, when He purged the Temple from its profaners. To this accusation Mark xiv. 56—59. Jesus answered nothing: there was no just plea for condemnation; the testimony of their witnesses, even had it been consistent, was insufficient to prove Him guilty of any real crime. But, as they had begun, so they were resolved to proceed: the man was in their power, whose ruin they had tried so hard to compass, and they were not thus to forego their advantage. The high priest, acquainted doubtless with the claims that Jesus had more than once put forth, stood up and solemnly adjured Him, "by the living God," (the strongest form of putting a criminal upon his oath,) to tell them whether He was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed. "And Jesus said, I AM: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Mark xiv. 61, 62. Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.

It was enough: His claim to the character of Messiah would naturally arouse their indignation; for ill could they brook to part with all their fond hopes of triumph, and to recognize the Christ in the despised Galilean before them. But it may be doubted, whether this claim would have been sufficient to condemn Him, had not His answer involved another assertion, which, in their opinion, not only proved Him to be a false Messiah, but rendered Him self-convicted as a blasphemer. This was the assertion of Divinity; a doctrine equally unpalatable both to the people and the council: for the Jews of that day expected for their Messiah only a human king and prophet, and kept entirely out of sight all view of John xii. 34.

LECTURE XIX. His divinity²; although they admitted that He was to abide for ever. Immediately upon the avowal of Jesus, "the high

Mark xiv.
63, 64.

priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? ye have heard the blasphemy; what think ye?" The sentence of the Sanhedrim was unanimous: to their eyes He was a blasphemer; "and they all condemned Him to be guilty of death." Judas, who knew His innocence, and who seems not to have anticipated His condemnation, struck with remorse, went to the chief priests and elders, cast down before them the wages of his sin, and "departed, and went and hanged himself."

Matt. xxvii.
3—5.

Anxious as they were to put Him to death, they were unable of themselves to proceed further, without incurring the charge of tumult and sedition; because the power of life and death rested entirely with the Roman authorities. They brought Him, therefore, before Pontius Pilate, who was at this time procurator of Judea; and well aware that the stern Gentile would laugh to scorn the charge of blasphemy, as one connected with their own superstitions, and utterly unworthy of his notice, they accused Him of treason to the emperor. "We found this fellow," said they, "perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a king." Pilate could no longer refuse to examine Him; for he knew the jealous character of his capricious master Tiberius, and was besides conscious of

Luke xxiii.
2.

² "The earliest Christian writers after the Apostolic age have informed us, that the Jews of those times, like their posterity in succeeding ages, expected for their Messiah a human king and prophet; and the single testimony of the Jew in Justin Martyr, a Samaritan, confirmed by the acquiescence of Justin himself, only a century after the death of Christ, might be thought sufficient to preclude all disagreement and doubt upon this subject." Trypho, the Jew, in the dialogue says, *καὶ γὰρ πάντες ἡμεῖς τὸν Χριστὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων προσδοκῶμεν γενήσεσθαι*. Wilson on the New Test. ch. i. s. 2. See also Orig. cont. Cels. L. i. 45, and iv. 2.

This remark must be taken with some degree of limitation; for Justin, speaking in another place of the expectations of the Jews with regard to Christ, says, *ἐλθεῖσθαι, καὶ παθεῖν, καὶ βασιλεῦσαι, καὶ προσκυνητὸν γενέσθαι Θεὸν ὁμολογοῦσιν*. Dial. cum Tryph. c. 68.

It would seem, then, that whilst the great mass of the people, with the hierarchy at their head, expected only a human Christ, the more diligent and less ambitious student of the prophecies regarded Him in a divine as well as human character.

his own unpopularity amongst the Jews, and therefore had good reason to dread their revenge, if he declined to investigate a charge like this. A very slight examination convinced him of the innocence of Jesus; and, hearing that He was a Galilean, he availed himself of the excuse, that Jesus was not within his jurisdiction, and so sent Him to Herod. LECTURE XIX.
Luke xxiii. 4. Ib. 7.

Antipas (for it was the same who had beheaded John) was glad of the opportunity, of seeing one of whom he had heard so much; he hoped besides “to have seen some miracle done by Him:” but to Herod’s questions, and to the vehement accusations of the chief priests and scribes, He answered nothing. Herod joined in the insults already heaped upon the unresisting Sufferer; “with his men of war he set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate.” Ib. 8. Ib. 9, 10. Ib. 11.

The governor once more convened the council, and was fully satisfied, that, as even Herod had sent Him back uncondemned, the charges brought against Him were utterly groundless, and originated in the envy of the priesthood. Thrice he endeavoured to deliver Him; but each attempt seemed only to add to the fury of the people, whom the priests had now gained over to advocate their views. He proposed merely to chastise Him and to let Him go, for it was customary at the Passover to release (as a boon to the people) any one prisoner whose freedom they demanded. But the priests had influence enough over them, to induce them to join in the clamour for the crucifixion of Jesus, and for the release of Barabbas, a robber and a murderer. Pilate, whose reluctance seems to have increased, until he even feared to put to death a man whom he knew to be innocent, sought yet more earnestly to release Him. He appealed to their compassion: he joined in the mockery of His royal pretensions: he arrayed Him in a purple robe, put a crown of thorns on His head, brought Him before them, and said, “Behold the man.” The clamour increased: the only answer to his appeal was, “Crucify Him! crucify Him!” and he himself was told explicitly, that, if he persisted in advocating His cause, he was not Cæsar’s friend. Pilate took alarm at this; but, willing to satisfy his conscience in taking only a passive part in His condemnation, “he took water and washed his hands

Matt. xxvii. 18.

John xviii. 38. xix. 4.

Ib. 12.

Luke xxiii. 16.

Matt. xxvii. 15.

Ib. 20.

Mark xv. 7.
John xviii. 40.

LECTURE before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of
 XIX.
 Matt. xxvii. 24, 25. See also, Deut. xxi. 6, 7. Ps. xxvi. 6. this just person, see ye to it. Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us, and on our children :” a fearful imprecation, and most fearfully has it been fulfilled. The governor’s scruples were satisfied by this act, and he thought the present opportunity was not to be missed of doing the Jews a pleasure, by throwing away the life, as he conceived, of an inconsiderable, friendless man, who, when once he was dead, would never be enquired after : and, from these motives of selfish cunning and guilty fear, Pilate, against the remonstrances of his conscience and the warnings of Heaven, consented to our Saviour’s death : “he released Barabbas unto them; and when He had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified ³.”

Matt. xxvii. 26.

Mark xii. 37.

At first sight it may appear astonishing, that the priests should have prevailed upon the same people, to turn round and clamour for His crucifixion, who but a few days before had hailed Jesus as the Messiah, and believed on Him as such, who had, many of them, been personally benefited by Him, and who always “heard Him gladly.” The Jewish hierarchy appear always to have had considerable influence over the people; and, in this instance, it would have been enough, to appeal to the popular prejudice of an earthly Messiah,—enough to prove to them, that, by His own admission, He was not that kind of deliverer, whom they, from their view of the prophecies, had been led to expect,—enough to shew, that He had excited hopes which He had neither the ability nor the will to realize : and the history of many a popular tumult will convince us, that there is no fury so savage as that of an excited and disappointed mob. But they had stronger grounds to go upon,—those of religion. More than once, even the people had murmured, when He alluded to His Divine origin; they had before endeavoured to stone

John vi. 41. 66.

³ The strange notion of Basilides, that Simon of Cyrene was crucified instead of Jesus, has already been noticed (p. 189, Lect. xvii.). The Apocryphal Gospel of Barnabas, in use amongst the Mohammedans, relates that Judas Iscariot was transformed into the likeness of Jesus, and in that shape was apprehended, scourged, and crucified, in spite of his protestations that he was not Jesus.

See the Gospel in the Appendix to White’s Bampton Lectures; see also Sale’s Koran, ch. iii. note, and Prelim. Dis. s. 4, p. 98.

Him as a blasphemer, because He declared that He existed before Abraham, and made Himself equal with God. Sensitive, then, as the Jews were, at this period of their history, of the slightest attack upon their national belief, it was no difficult matter to induce them to join in the cry, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

LECTURE
XIX.
John viii.
58, 59.
x. 30, 33.

John xix. 7.

Deserted, as He was, by those who made such vehement protestations of fidelity, all were not thus forgetful of the holy life and merciful deeds of Jesus. When He was led forth to execution, exhausted from the many horrors of that dreadful night, wounded, weak, and bleeding, "there followed Him a great company of people and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him." To mark the scorn of His persecutors more fully, He was crucified between two malefactors, one of whom railed on Him with the taunt, "If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us;" whilst the other rebuked his companion, acknowledged his own sinfulness, confessed Jesus to be the Lord, and, in the fulness of his faith, implored to be remembered in His kingdom. He was forgiven: one instance only, says St. Augustine, of the acceptance of a dying repentance is recorded: one, that none might despair; and only one, that none might presume⁴.

Luke xxiii.
27.

August.
Symbol. ad
Catec. i. 6.

As Jesus made no effort to release Himself, the priests, and scribes, and elders, and doubtless the people too, were confirmed in their suspicions that He was an impostor: they believed that they had done God a service in His execution. "Thou that destroyest the Temple," said some, "and buildest it in three days, save Thyself: if Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Some said, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save: if He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe

⁴ The discrepancy between the account of the conduct of the malefactors, as given by St. Luke, and that recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark, may be accounted for, by supposing, that they are alluding to different hours of the day; that at the elevation of the cross, both the malefactors joined in cursing Him; but that "at a later period, when one of them began to renew his revilings, the other evinced the conversion of his heart by rebuking his associate in crime; and proved the sincerity of his faith, by offering to the very Being whom he had blasphemed such a petition, as implied the acknowledgment of His being the expected Messiah." Dr. Hook's "Last Days of our Lord's Ministry," Lect. vi. p. 266.

LECTURE XIX. Him." Others exclaimed, "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him, for He said, I am the Son of God." "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," was the Saviour's prayer for His murderers and revilers: and, even in His worst agonies, He was mindful of His bereaved mother's unprotected state; He consigned her to the care of the beloved disciple, St. John,—alone, save the women of Galilee, found faithful in that trying hour.

But there were signs and wonders presently to come, which must have made even the most stout-hearted pause in their revilings, and tremble for what they had done: wonders, with which even the bold Roman was appalled, who feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God." It would seem that they were not without their effect, in working some secret misgivings in the bystanders as to the real character of the holy Sufferer. "All the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned."

Well might they be thus tamed down: for there was darkness over all the earth from the sixth to the ninth hour; and when Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," and gave up the ghost,—at that instant, "the veil of the temple," a curtain of rich tapestry, that separated the holy place of the Temple from the Holy of Holies, "was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;" the earth did quake, and the rocks were rent asunder, and the graves were opened. Jesus was dead; to the surprise of the Romans, when they came to remove the bodies at the request of the Jews, who were anxious "that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day, for that Sabbath day was an high day." To ascertain the fact, "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water."

This remark of the Apostle, who was an eye-witness of the transaction, may, perhaps, explain to us, how it was that Jesus died so much sooner than was usual with those who underwent crucifixion; a mode of punishment which, though exquisitely painful, was singularly lingering, because it left the vital parts untouched. "The real cause of the death of Jesus appears to have been rupture of the heart, occasioned

by mental agony. Such rupture is attended by instant death without previous exhaustion, and by the effusion into the pericardium (called by St. John the side) of blood, which in this particular case, though scarcely in any other, separates into its two constituent parts, so as to present the appearance commonly called blood and water⁵.”

LECTURE
XIX.

Macbride's
Lect. on the
Diatessaron,
p. 521.

The body was taken down from the cross, and given to Joseph, a rich man of Arimathæa, “a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews,” who had begged the corpse of Pilate. He, together with Nicodemus, who, on a previous occasion, had pleaded His cause against the violence of the Pharisees, took the body, “wrapped it in a clean linen cloth” with myrrh, aloes, and spices, “as the manner of the Jews is to bury,” “laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock,” near the place where He was crucified, “rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.” They were thus unconscious agents in fulfilling an apparently contradictory prophecy, which, from the time of its delivery, had been considered as referring, in some mystical manner, to the Messiah; “He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death.”

John xix. 38.

Matt. xxvii.
58.

John vii.
50—52.

Matt. xxvii.
59, 60.

John xix.
39—42.

Is. liii. 9.

The enmity, and perhaps we may say the fear, of the Jewish hierarchy, did not end with His death. Remembering His words, that after three days He should rise again, and professing to fear, that His disciples would steal the body before the expiration of the time, point to the empty tomb, and so persuade the fickle people that He had risen from the dead,—they went to Pilate, and alleged this reason for requesting, that a guard might watch the sepulchre until the time had passed. He granted their request. As an additional security they sealed the stone, which was the only entrance

⁵ Dr. Burton thinks that St. John records this fact to confute the Docetæ, who denied the incarnation, and looked upon the body of Jesus as a phantom. “Of all the circumstances which attended the crucifixion, none would be more conclusive for the corporeal nature of Jesus than the fact of a spear being thrust into His side, and blood issuing from the wound. If any doubt should have been felt as to the reality of His body, the circumstance of the blood would surely remove it: and it was natural that St. John would dwell with particular emphasis upon the fact, since it was one which he had seen with his own eyes, and which so powerfully confuted the arguments of his opponents.” Bampton Lect. vi. 170. 173. Iren. iii. 11. 3.

LECTURE to the tomb; thus guarding, as they conceived, against all
 XIX. possibility of deception on the part of His disciples, or of
 collusion on the part of the soldiers, even had the latter been
 Matt. xxvii. inclined to become parties to the fraud.
 62—66.

Such, then, is the history of our Saviour's sufferings for the sins of men; summed up in the simple language of the creed, "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried." And, "if hunger and thirst, if revilings and contempt, if sorrows and agonies, if stripes and buffetings, if condemnation and crucifixion be sufferings, Jesus 'suffered.' If the infirmities of our nature, if the weight of our sins, if the malice of man, if the machinations of Satan, if the hand of God could make Him suffer, our Saviour 'suffered.' If the annals of times, if the writings of His Apostles, if the death of His martyrs, if the confession of the Gentiles, if the scoffs of the Jews, be testimonies, Jesus 'suffered.' Nor was there ever any which thought He did not really and truly suffer, but such as withal irrationally pretended He was not really and truly man."

Pearson on
 the Creed,
 vol. i. p.
 320.

As, then, the creed lays down the position, that Jesus Christ is God, so also is it careful to establish the fact, that He is man⁶; man, as we have seen, in His sufferings, His trials, His temptations, His life, His death. The reason is clear. It is to assure us, that, as man had sinned, so man had suffered for that sin; that, as man had incurred the forfeit, so man had paid the penalty; that, as man had yielded to temptation, and lost his relationship to the Godhead, so man, by complete victory over the three great engines of human temptation, had recovered that relationship; that, as in the man "Adam all die, even so in" the man "Christ shall all be made alive;" that, "as by the offence of one" man,

1 Cor. xv.
 22.

⁶ Allusion has been made, in the preceding note, to the opinion of the Docetæ, who "confessed not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." 1 John iv. 3. It seems more than probable, that the clauses which refer to the manhood of our Saviour were originally inserted, to protest against their heresy. Unable to see how the Christ *ought* to suffer, and unwilling to admit that God *could* suffer, they held that all His sufferings were in appearance only. They "believed the body of Jesus to have been either a mere optical illusion, or like the apparition of an angel, something ethereal and impalpable, which had no connexion or affinity with matter." Burton's Lectures on Eccl. Hist. xii. p. 384. August. de Hæres. 1. 4. Tertull. de Præscript. adv. Hæres. c. 33. 44. Epiphan. de Hæres. 1. i. tom. 2. s. 3.

“judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one” man, “the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

LECTURE
XIX.

Rom. v. 18.

The words “under Pontius Pilate” were added to the declaration of our Saviour’s sufferings, principally to mark the time of His crucifixion; because, by fixing it during the short administration of Pilate, the transaction and the time predicted by Daniel coincided. It appears that this was rendered necessary, in consequence of the attempts of the enemies of Christianity “to unsettle the time of His passion, that thereby they might at last deny the passion itself.”

Ruffin. in
Symb.
August.
de Fide, et
Symb. c. 5.

Pearson,
vol. i. p. 342.

LECTURE XX.

PSALM xvi. 10.

“Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.”

LECTURE XX. **ALTHOUGH**, from the foundation of the Christian Church, the descent of Christ into hell was thoroughly received by the faithful, it was not formally professed, as a point of necessary belief, until a comparatively late period.

Horsley, Ser. xx.
Pearson, note m. vol. ii. p. 308.
Pearson, vol. i. p. 380.
Pearson, note o. vol. ii. p. 310.
Tomline's Theol. vol. ii. in Art. iii.

The earliest orthodox creed¹, in which we find it, is that of the Church of Aquileia, in the fifth century. It is not found in the confession of faith drawn up at Nice, nor was it inserted when that creed was revised and completed by the council held at Constantinople. In the sixth century we find it admitted into many creeds; and it was confirmed by the fourth council of Toledo, A.D. 633, and by the sixteenth council held at the same place, A.D. 693.

Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. ii. c. 46.
August. de Hær. 55.
Athanas. contr.
Apollin. l. i. c. 13, 14.
Theodoret. in Ps. 17.
King on the Creed, p. 244.

Its adoption, as a fundamental point of faith, may probably be traced to a desire on the part of the Church, to protest against the heresies of a section of the Arians, the Eunomians, and the Apollinarians; who, although they differed much from each other in some doctrinal views, yet mainly agreed in denying to Christ a human, reasonable soul,—and in asserting that his Godhead performed the office of a soul.

Although, then, we may agree with Bishop Tomline, that one reason for the adoption of this clause into the Creed may be found in a wish, to establish “the actual separation of

¹ The creed which the Arian bishops put forth in the council held at Ariminum, A.D. 359, cannot be called an orthodox confession of faith: it is well known that it was advanced more as a cloak to their heresy, than as embodying their real opinions. In this creed we find them confessing, that Christ “descended into hell, and there disposed all things; at whose sight the porters of hell gates trembled.” Socrat. Hist. Eccl. b. ii. c. 37.

Christ's soul and body, in opposition to those heretics who asserted that the crucifixion produced only a trance or deliquium, and that Christ did not really suffer death ;" another, and perhaps a more direct, reason may be traceable to the heresies above named.

LECTURE
XX.
Tomline's
Theol.
vol. ii.
p. 157.

With reference to the profession of faith in Christ, one main object of the Creed, after establishing His Godhead, seems to be, to shew that He was in all things "made like unto His brethren," "yet without sin." It asserts, then, that like them He was conceived in the womb, born of a woman, lived, suffered, died, and was buried as a man : and further, it means evidently to say, that, after death, His soul, even as that of a man, was separated from His body ; the latter to repose in the grave until His resurrection, the former to descend to that invisible place where the spirits are constrained to abide, until their reunion with their fleshly tabernacle. The humanity of Christ is thus distinctly kept in view from His birth to His resurrection.

Heb. ii. 17.
iv. 15.
2 Cor. v. 21.
1 Pet. ii. 22.

Whilst the Fathers of the Primitive Church were unanimous, in admitting the fact of Christ's descent into hell ; they do not appear to have been perfectly agreed, as to the object and effect of that descent.

Iren. adv.
Hær. l. iv.
c. 45.
Clem. Alex.
Strom. l. vi.
p. 638.
Orig. contr.
Cels. l. ii.
c. 43.
August.
Ep. lvii. ad
Dardan.
c. 2. s. 5.
Ambros. de
Incar. c. 5.
Cyr. Cater.
lect. iv. 11,
and xiv. 19.
Ambros. de
Fide. l. iv.
c. 1. s. 8.
Hier. in
Zech. c. 9.
in Job, c. 36.
Pearson,
vol. i. p. 402.
Clem. Alex.
Strom. l. vi.
ut sup.
Hier. in
Isai. c. xiv.
Pearson,
ut sup.

"Some believed that He descended to that place of Hades, where the souls of all the faithful, from the death of the righteous Abel to the death of Christ, were detained ; and there, dissolving all the power by which they were detained below, translated them into a far more glorious place, and estated them in a condition far more happy in the heavens above. Others of them understood no such translation of place, or alteration of condition there, conceiving that the souls of all men are detained below still, and shall not enter into heaven until the general resurrection." Others conceived that our Saviour went to the place of torment, and that "the end of His descent was," by preaching to them the Gospel, "to deliver souls from those miseries which they felt, and to translate them to a place of happiness, and a glorious condition : " whilst others believed, that, by this preaching and this power, "hell was so emptied, that every soul was presently released from all the pains which before it suffered."

Cyril. Hom.
Pasch. 7.

Conflicting as these opinions were, it seems to have been

LECTURE XX. an almost universal belief in earlier days, that the triumph of Christ was, in some mysterious manner, connected with His descent into hell². We cannot be surprised to find, that there was also a considerable difference of opinion as to the kind of hell to which Christ went; a difference which has been already incidentally noticed.

Cyrl. Catec.
l. xiv. 19.
Athanas. de
Incarnat.
Christi, c. 5.
Tertull. de
Anim. c. 55.

Some, taking the word which we translate "hell" for the common receptacle of the souls of all men, both the just and unjust, thought the soul of Christ went only to that part of hell where the spirits of the just reposed; others conceived that He visited both just and unjust: whilst Augustine propounded an idea, carried out subsequently to a greater extent by Calvin, that it was hell in the popular sense, the place of torment, to which our Saviour went in the interval between His death and resurrection. "If Christ," are Calvin's words, "is said to have descended into hell, it need be no matter of surprise, since He bore that death which is inflicted upon the wicked by an angry God, and endured in His soul ('horrible,' says Bishop Horsley, 'to think or mention,') the fearful torments of a damned and reprobate man."

Cyrl. Catec.
l. iv. c. 11.
Hier. in
Eccl. c. 9.
S. Ambros.
de Fide.
l. iv. c. 1.
s. 8.
Clem. Alex.
Strom. l. vi.
p. 638.
August. de
Genes.
ad lit.
l. xii. c. 33.
Horsley's
Serm. xx.
p. 152.
Calvin,
Instit. l. ii.
c. 16. s. 10.

Calvin's opinion seems to have been founded upon the idea, that, as our blessed Lord was the substitute for sinners, so it was needful, that He should endure in the body and the spirit, both before and after death, the pains and penalties, the sorrows and punishment of sin. But, independently of the reasonable belief, that when our Saviour said upon the cross, "It is finished," it was then given unto Him to "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied,"—to look upon the sacrifice for sin as complete,—Calvin's position is untenable upon other grounds.

John xix.
30.

Is. liii. 11.

² Bingham tells us, that, as the Church was wont at Easter to absolve sinners from the bonds of excommunication, so the emperors used to loose the bonds of those that were in prison for their offences. He adds the reason, upon the authority of Chrysostom. "As our Lord, when He was in hell, or the state and place of the dead, set at liberty all that were under the power of death; so His servants, contributing what they are able, in imitation of the mercy of their Lord, loose men from these visible bonds; having no power to loose them from those which are spiritual and invisible." Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. b. xx. c. 5. s. 6. Chrysost. Hom. in Ps. cxlv. (Hom. 78 in Hebdom. Mag. s. 1.) See also Cranmer's Catechism; "The seconde Sermon, Of our Redemption;" and the "Institution of a Christian Man," set forth A.D. 1536, Art. v.

It is impossible that He, who was the “Lamb without blemish and without spot,” could endure the worst tortures, or indeed any tortures of a condemned spirit. In what do they consist? not in the mere endurance of punishment, but in the conviction that the sufferings are deserved; in the stings of an evil conscience, at last awakened to the reality of its guilt; in remorse for unrepented and, therefore, unatoned-for sin; in the utter despair of regaining God’s favour, then known to be justly forfeited; in the remembrance of grace resisted, opportunities wasted, and vows forgotten; and lastly, not only in the conscious loss of God’s presence, but in the assurance that this loss is for ever. The eternity of hell is the heaviest punishment of the damned; and neither this, nor any other penalty belonging to a condemned spirit, could the blessed Jesus suffer: “there is a worm that never dieth, which could not lodge within His breast; that is, a remorse of conscience seated in the soul for what that soul hath done.”

LECTURE
XX.
1 Pet. i. 19.

Pearson,
vol. i.
p. 389.

But, leaving these disquisitions, it remains to see what scriptural testimony we have, either expressed or implied, upon the several points connected with a subject as interesting as it is mysterious.

The fact of the descent into hell is sufficiently proved by the sixteenth Psalm,—a mystical prayer spoken by David, in the character of high priest, prophetically, “in the hope of that priesthood which was to come into his family, in the person of his descendant.” The prophet, there speaking as the Messiah in his sacerdotal character, expresses his confidence that *His* soul shall not be left in hell, and that *His* flesh shall not see corruption. There can be no question, but that this passage refers to Christ: for St. Peter, in his first sermon on the day of Pentecost, after having quoted the prophecy alluded to, does so apply it. “From this text, if there were no other,” the literal meaning of the descent into hell would be “clearly and infallibly deduced. For if the soul of Christ were not left in hell at His resurrection, then it *was* in hell *before* His resurrection; but it was not there either before His death, or after His resurrection; therefore it descended into hell after His death and before His resurrection.” “Hence it is so clearly evinced that the soul of Christ was in the place called

See Horsley
on the
Psalms, in
loc.

Acts ii.
25—31.

Horsley,
Ser. xx.
p. 154.
Beveridge
on Art. iii.
Aug. Ep.
ad Evod.
xcix. 3.

LECTURE hell, that none but an infidel," saith St. Augustine, "can
 XX. deny it."

The fact of Christ's descent into hell being thus established from Scripture, let us endeavour to ascertain from the same source, what kind of hell it was to which our Saviour went; and this will go far to settle, what was the class of persons with whom, for that brief season, He remained.

Much of the existing difference of opinion, respecting the right interpretation of this clause of the Creed, has arisen from the poverty of our language, which possesses no single word answering to the Hebrew Sheol, and the Greek Hades, —both of which words convey much the same meaning, namely, the invisible place of departed souls; without any necessary reference to that place being one either of joy or suffering. The English word "hell," derived from the Saxon "hele," signifies primarily much the same thing as the Hebrew and Greek synonyms, and in that sense it is frequently used in our translation of the New Testament. But language has altered; and, in these days, the word "hell" scarcely conveys any other meaning than that of the place of torment, where the spirits of the damned pay the penalty of their transgressions in the flesh.

"This certainly," says Bishop Horsley, "was not the hell to which the soul of Christ descended: He descended to hell properly so called,—to the invisible mansion of departed spirits: and to that part of it where the souls of the faithful, when they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity."

When the penitent thief on the cross recognized and acknowledged Christ as the Son of God, whilst Jew and Gentile were adding to His agony by mockeries and taunts, his prayer of faith was, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." The Saviour's answer was, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Here is a distinct promise, that on that very day the soul of the repentant felon should accompany the Saviour's soul to paradise. What is paradise? Twice is this word used in other passages of Scripture, and in both cases we can only assign to it a meaning expressive of some place beyond this world, under God's protection, the inhabitants of which repose in the

King on the
 Creed, c. iv.
 p. 193.
 Hey's Lec-
 tures, iv. 3.
 s. 4—6.

Campbell's
 Prelim.
 Diss. d. vi.
 p. ii. s. 11.

Horsley,
 Ser. xx.
 p. 149.

Luke xxiii.
 43.

2 Cor. xii. 4.

Rev. ii. 7.

enjoyment of His favour. Thither, then, was the soul of the LECTURE XX. thief, together with that of the Saviour, conveyed ; to a receptacle of departed spirits in communion with God : for it would have been a punishment, not a blessing, had his soul been compelled to accompany that of Jesus to a place of torment, as Augustine, Calvin, and some others would have us believe was the hell to which He went.

See Beveridge on Art. iii.

There are other passages of Scripture which prove to us, that the souls of those who die in the Lord are, immediately upon their separation from the body, ushered into a state of blessedness, where they are bidden to repose until the judgment-day ; and thus we are enabled to answer many points of anxious interest connected with that intermediate state.

In that touchingly eloquent passage in Ecclesiastes, where the miseries and discomforts of old age are depicted, the royal preacher concludes the description with a revelation of what is to take place, when death has closed the scene : "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was ; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Such was the belief of Ecc. xii. 7. the inspired men of God, under a dispensation confessedly imperfect : but when He appeared, who "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel," it is natural to 2 Tim. i. 10. suppose, that He would give us a clearer revelation of the most important points connected with our future state ; and we are not disappointed in this hope.

The well-known parable of the rich man and Lazarus speaks, as plainly as language can speak, of a place assigned to each class of spirits, the wicked and the good, when their earthly trial shall have closed for ever : a place, in which they each receive such blessings or such woes, as may give them a foretaste of their future position, as it will be irrevocably settled at the judgment-day. Lazarus is in "Abraham's bosom,"—into which, at his death, he was "carried by the angels ;" an expression which would perhaps warrant us in Luke xvi. 22. concluding, that those ministering spirits are indeed commissioned to keep watch around the bed of the departing saints in Christ. He is in company with the spirits of the good and godly of every age : not in the Father's presence, not yet admitted into the fulness of those joys "which God hath prepared for them that love Him ;" not yet ushered into "that 1 Cor. ii. 9.

LECTURE perfect consummation of bliss, both in body and soul," to
 XX. which our Liturgy alludes. The rich man is "in torments,"
 Burial Serv. but alone: in agony indeed, but still, as far as we can see,
 Luke xvi. spared the additional misery of being surrounded by the
 23. curses and wailings of other condemned spirits, whose mutual
 reproaches will, perhaps, form one of the most fearful ingre-
 dients in the cup of eternal wretchedness. In each case it
 would seem, that the perfection of our happiness and of our
 misery is reserved unto that hour, when the body shall be
 reunited to the soul. If they have been purified together in
 this world, together will they be also glorified, when Christ
 shall come to gather His own unto His eternal kingdom. If
 together they have sinned, they will be punished together,
 when they hear those awful words, "Depart from Me, ye
 cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his
 angels."

Matt. xxv.
41.

It may be urged, that this passage of Scripture is only an
 allegory, and must not therefore be applied to establish doc-
 trinal facts: but we are yet to learn, that Christ could have
 given us wrong information upon any point, even in an alle-
 gory; or that He would have spoken thus plainly upon the
 mysteries of the world of spirits, unless He meant His illus-
 tration, at least in its leading incidents, to be literally inter-
 preted.

But the revelations of Scripture, with regard to the inter-
 mediate state, are not limited to a single parable. There are
 other passages which throw so much light upon it, as, without
 satisfying idle curiosity, may furnish us with topics of serious
 and grateful reflection.

It is called a state of rest: "I heard a voice from heaven,"
 is the testimony of the sainted John, "saying unto me, Write,
 Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth:
 Rev. xiv. 13. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours."
 And it is something more than a state of rest; it is one of
 privilege: for there the departed saints in Christ are permitted
 to rejoice in holding communion with their Lord; and although
 He "Himself is seated at the right hand of God in the highest
 heaven, yet there also He lifts up the light of His countenance,
 and His glorious Majesty is upon them." "I am in a strait
 betwixt two," said the aged Apostle to his Philippian converts,

Townson's
Dis. xvii.
p. 219.

“having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.” But had not that departure ushered him into rest and peace,—had it not conveyed him into the immediate presence of his Saviour, it would have been far better for him to have remained in his sphere of usefulness, converting souls to Christ, doing his Lord’s bidding, the honoured instrument of feeding His Lambs, and of bringing them within the guardianship of His spiritual fold. It was with the same conviction, of the blessedness in store for those who die in communion with their Saviour, that the Apostle declared that, “whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord;” but that, when we are “absent from the body,” we are “present with the Lord.” “Better,” as this state is, than the highest sphere of earthly usefulness and privilege, it is yet one of incomplete happiness, one of expectancy (though, we may reasonably suppose, of unclouded peace as well); for the souls of the martyrs are represented, as anxiously waiting for the accomplishment of God’s counsels with regard to the welfare and protection of His Church.

LECTURE
XX.
Phil. i. 23.

2Cor. v. 6. 8.

Rev. vi.
9—11.

These scriptural declarations, then,—as they shew that to the faithful the state of the soul, in the interval between the death of the body and the judgment-day, is one of rest, and peace, and privilege, in the presence of Christ,—so they will help to clear up another point of considerable interest: they will prove to us, that it is not, during that period, as some would have it, buried in an unconscious dream,—but that it goes to its “own place;” and there it is still alive and active, still sensible of pleasure or of pain,—endued with superior knowledge, invested with higher faculties,—peacefully looking forward to an increase of its joys, or brooding in mournful anticipation of untold additions to its agony, when Christ shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and dead.

Acts i. 25.

With regard to those who die, as we think, in their sins, it is not for us to pronounce, what scenes may or may not open to the soul, when it bursts from out its prison of the flesh: but when we consign to its mother earth the corpse of one whom we can indeed regard as a departed child of God, well may we give hearty thanks unto our heavenly Father, that it hath pleased Him “to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world.” It is, because we can acknow-

Burial Serv.

LECTURE XX.
 Burial Serv. ledge with our Church, that "the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity;" that they are in a state of painless bliss, a state of expectant repose, wherein they are privileged to look for the fulness of that joy which shall be revealed hereafter.

We must further endeavour to ascertain, what information Scripture affords us as to the end of our Saviour's mission to the regions of departed souls. St. Peter tells us, that, when Christ was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit He went and preached unto the spirits in prison³." It is a passage beset with difficulties, and one of which perhaps no thoroughly satisfactory elucidation can be given.

1 Pet. iii.
18, 19.

Thus much, however, we can conclude with safety,—that the mission of our Saviour was to "preach." It remains to see, what was the probable tenor of His holy lessons, and to what class of persons they were likely to be given.

So far as we can understand the end and object of all preaching, it is, to convert souls to Christ, by putting before them the awful truths of the Gospel. Such could not have been the end of our Saviour's preaching to any class of spirits. For in the grave there is no conversion, no abandonment of old sins, no acquisition of new virtues: as the tree falls, so it lies: and though, when the soul has taken wing from out its earthly tabernacle and awakes in that new world where it must abide until its final judgment, the sudden flood of knowledge, that then will burst upon it, must compel it to mourn bitterly over the remembrance of its transgressions, it cannot exercise that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." The souls of

2 Cor. vii.
10.

³ In the Articles of religion agreed upon in convocation in the sixth year of Edw. VI. 1552, the descent of our Saviour into hell was proved by this very text.

It was then declared, "that the body of Christ lay in the grave until His resurrection; but His spirit, which He gave up, was with the spirits which were detained in prison, or in hell, and preached to them, as the place in St. Peter testifieth." In the revision of the Articles in 1562, the proof from St. Peter was withdrawn, whilst the substance of the doctrine was retained. "This change of opinion," says Bishop Horsley, "I fear, is to be ascribed to an undue reliance of the divines of that time on the authority of St. Austin; for St. Austin was, I think, the first who doubted of the literal sense of this passage of St. Peter." Horsley, *Serm. xx.* p. 163. Burnet on Art. iii. King on the Creed, ch. iv. p. 184. Hey's Lectures, iv. c. 3. § 2.

the righteous need no conversion; those of the wicked cannot exercise it: "for we may as well believe," says Bishop Pearson, "that the devils were saved, as those souls which were once tormented with them." It could not have been repentance and faith, then, that our Saviour preached, nor could it have been to the damned that His words were addressed; for, as they cannot repent and turn to God, we can scarcely conceive it consistent with the mercies of Jesus, that He would visit them with the sole purpose of announcing the advent of that redemption to others, which they themselves had lost for ever.

LECTURE
XX.
Pearson,
vol. i.
p. 407.

We may perhaps conceive, then, that the bestowal of an increase of knowledge upon the spirits of departed Saints, was the object of our Saviour's preaching; and the peculiar force of the original word, translated "preached," which implies a proclaiming as a herald, rather than any simple declaration, may serve to strengthen this supposition. ἐκήρυξεν.

But here, confessedly, a twofold difficulty meets us: first, the souls, to whom our Saviour went, are said to be "in prison;" and secondly, they are the souls of the antediluvians, who, "sometime were disobedient" during the preaching of Noah. The expression, the "spirits in prison," would seem, at first sight, to give some colour to Calvin's belief, that the soul of Jesus tarried with the damned, before it rejoined His body and rose again from the dead; whilst the declaration, that these "spirits in prison" were of those that perished in the deluge, would appear to be fatal to the supposition, that His preaching was a message of mercy to the redeemed only. Here, again, we shall receive much assistance from referring to the original Greek: but the objections may be answered by one, who has thrown much light upon this disputed passage. "The original word translated 'prison' in this text of the Apostle," says Bishop Horsley, "imports merely a place of safe keeping; for so this passage might be rendered with great exactness: 'He went and preached to the spirits in safe keeping.' And the invisible mansion of departed souls is to the righteous a place of safe keeping, where they are preserved under the shadow of God's right hand, as their condition sometimes is described in Scripture, till the season shall arrive for their advancement to their

τοὺς ἐν
φυλακῇ
πνεύμασι.

LECTURE future glory; as the souls of the wicked, on the other hand,
 XX.
 are reserved, in the other division of the same place, unto the
 judgment of the great day."

Horsley,
 Ser. xx.
 p. 159.

Ib. p. 167.

The same learned writer gives it as his opinion, that the expression "sometime were disobedient," as applied to the souls in custody, implies, that they were recovered from that disobedience, and, before their death, had been brought to repentance and faith in the Redeemer to come. And further he says, it does not "startle me to find antediluvian souls in safe keeping for final salvation: on the contrary, I should find it very difficult to believe (unless I were to read it somewhere in the Bible) that of the millions that perished in the general deluge, all died hardened in impenitence and unbelief, insomuch, that not one of that race could be an object of future mercy, beside the eight persons who were miraculously saved in the ark, for the purpose of repeopling the depopulated earth. Nothing in the general plan of God's dealings with mankind, as revealed in Scripture, makes it necessary to suppose, that of the antediluvian race who might repent upon Noah's preaching, more would be saved from the temporal judgment than the purpose of a gradual repopulation of the world demanded; or to suppose, on the other hand, that all who perished in the flood are to perish everlastingly in the lake of fire."

Ib. p. 166.

"It may be conceived," he adds, "that the souls of those who died in that dreadful visitation might, from that circumstance, have peculiar apprehensions of themselves, as the marked victims of Divine vengeance, and might peculiarly need the consolation which the preaching of our Lord, in the subterranean regions, afforded to these prisoners of hope."

Ib. p. 170.

But there were other souls, included in the general censure and punishment of the deluge, who were nevertheless innocent of any personal share in the disobedience of the scoffers at the preacher of righteousness. There were surely some little ones amongst the sufferers in that awful judgment, who, though they perished with their fathers, were guiltless of any participation in their sins. It would be indeed a mission of mercy, worthy of the Redeemer, to hush to rest any misgivings that these spirits may have entertained; to soothe the anxieties that probably beset them; to proclaim

that to them redemption, through the blood of Christ, extended. LECTURE
XX.

Nor, though Scripture is silent upon the theme, can we doubt, but that the preaching of the glad tidings of salvation came, as a message of unspeakable comfort to many amongst the redeemed souls, there pent in safe keeping until the resurrection of all flesh. May we not suppose, without indulging in any fanciful speculation, that there were spirits, who would receive such tidings with peculiar thankfulness? How would Adam rejoice to know from the Redeemer Himself, that He had paid the penalty of that sin which his first transgression had introduced into the world, and entailed as a heavy curse on his posterity! What holy joy would fill the soul of Abraham, to see that promised One in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed; and to know that the dawn of that blessing had appeared amongst his children! How would that glorious host of prophets, whose inspired tongues proclaimed the coming of the Christ, break forth afresh into thanksgiving, to witness the fulfilment of their heavenly strains! If, as we gather from Holy Writ, even the souls of the wicked can feel and express some kindly sympathy with those whom they have left behind on earth; if the clearer knowledge of God's dealings, which is imparted to those disembodied souls, bids even them to entertain a deep anxiety for others, lest they also come to the place of torment, Luke xvi.
28. we can well conceive the rapturous rejoicing that would animate the spirits of the just, when it was given to them to see the soul, and hear the voice of Him, who had taken upon Himself the curse of sin which rested upon all the posterity of Adam.

But whatever may be the doubts or difficulties with which this mysterious subject is beset; little as we can take upon ourselves to determine any thing, beyond the bare fact of Christ's descent into hell, it is not so hard to discover the use and importance of that fact, as a point of Christian doctrine. "It is a clear confutation of the dismal notion of death as a temporary extinction of the life of the whole man; or, what is no less gloomy and discouraging, the notion of the sleep of the soul in the interval between death and the resurrection. Christ was made so truly man, that whatever took

LECTURE XX. place in the human nature of Christ may be considered as a model and example of what must take place, in a certain due proportion and degree, in every man united to Him. Christ's soul survived the death of His body; therefore, shall the soul of every believer survive the body's death: Christ's disembodied soul descended into hell; thither, therefore, shall the soul of every believer in Christ descend: in that place the soul of Christ, in its separate state, possessed and exercised active powers; in the same place, therefore, shall the believer's soul possess and exercise activity: Christ's soul was not left in hell; neither shall the souls of His servants there be left, but for a season: the appointed time will come when the Redeemer shall set open the doors of their prison house, and say to His redeemed, 'Go forth!'"

Horsley,
Ser. xx.
p. 172.

LECTURE XXI.

1 COR. xv. 14.

“ If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”

It was not to be expected, that our Lord's unlearned followers should have understood His figurative allusions to the resurrection, conveyed in the type of the Temple, and the sign of Jonas: but it does, at first sight, seem altogether unaccountable that they, who had so often been witnesses of His power, so often had occasion to see the truth of His words, should have stumbled at His explicit promise, that He should rise again from the dead. The worldly view which they took of His mission, and the persuasion which they entertained, in common with their countrymen, that the Messiah was never to die, but that His reign was to last for ever, is the key to this spirit of unbelief. Notwithstanding His declarations to the contrary, they would persist in looking upon his kingdom as one of this world; and, when He was actually dead, they seem at once to have abandoned both His cause and their own hopes. They kept together in secrecy and apprehension, fearing, doubtless, that the same jealous hatred, which had struck down the Master, would extend itself to the disciples, if they were known as such in public.

From the hour of their Lord's apprehension, they were even as sheep having no shepherd. With one exception, that of the beloved disciple, they left Him to be watched in His last agony by the women of Galilee, more faithful then, though less privileged before. They suffered strangers to ask for, and to bear away his corpse; for they had not the courage to go boldly before the Roman, and avow their

LECTURE
XXI.

John ii. 19.

Matt. xii.
39, 40.

Matt. xvii.
23.

John xii. 34.

John xix.
38.

LECTURE attachment to Him, dead or living. To strangers was left
 XXI. the pious task, of paying the last sad honours to His body :
 they furnished the spices, they wrapped it in linen bandages,
 John xix. 40. "as the manner of the Jews is to bury," they furnished the
 tomb, and laid therein the corpse. And, on the morning of
 the third day, no faithful Apostle was keeping watch beside
 the sepulchre, in earnest expectation of witnessing the re-
 appearance of his Master's well known and much loved
 form. Still were the women, who tended the holy Sufferer
 on the cross, the only persons who had the courage to brave
 the dangers, that awaited the avowal of affection for the de-
 parted Galilæan Prophet.

Lecture xix.
 p. 225.

So much a matter of notoriety, however, was His own
 assertion, that He should rise again from the dead, that, as
 has been before noticed, the chief priests and Pharisees made
 it the groundwork of their application to Pilate for a guard,
 in order to prevent an occurrence, the possibility of which
 they seem to have more than suspected ; and the effect of
 which they evidently dreaded, as undoing all for which they
 had toiled so hard, and, as they thought, so successfully.
 Looking on Him, as they did, in the light of a deceiver,
 and a trafficker with the powers of darkness, it was natural
 that they should be more than commonly anxious for the
 result of the three days' trial. To a certain extent, they
 knew and felt, that they had triumphed by putting Him to
 death. But it is probable that they were unable to satisfy
 themselves, how far the demons, who, as they declared, had
 helped Him when living, would assist Him to carry on His
 imposture after death. Here was a reasonable ground not
 only of uncertainty, but even of fear ; and, however conve-
 nient they might have found it, to assign to Pilate the pre-
 text upon which they demanded the protection of a guard, it
 seems next to impossible, that they could have entertained
 any real dread of the humble disciples of the crucified Jesus.
 They saw, that at His apprehension He was abandoned by
 them all : they knew that, at His examination before the
 Sanhedrim, there was not one who had the courage to expose
 the garbled tale of the false witnesses, not one who would
 speak a word of defence in the hall of Pilate. They must
 have been aware that He was left to die alone, as far as His

own immediate followers were concerned; and they must have known that, after death, it was no one of His chosen companions who interfered, to prevent any insult being offered to His remains. It could have been no real fear, then, of the Apostles, that induced them to take such extraordinary precautions. That great sabbath, which was a day of general rejoicing to the Jews, and at that time one of peculiar triumph to the priesthood and to the Pharisees, as witnessing the end of the claims of One who, for three years, had laid bare their hypocrisy, and had opposed their prejudices, was a day of too much sorrow, and even despair to the dismayed followers of Jesus, to admit of their plotting any scheme in order to revive their own supposed influence, which they felt had expired with their Master.

LECTURE
XXI.

The circumstances attending the resurrection are, in themselves, not only so interesting, but so intimately connected with the very existence of our faith, as to demand a minute examination: and, though no one of the evangelists gives a detailed account, yet we may gather thus much from their respective narratives.

Before day-break, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were on their way to the sepulchre. It was not hope, but affection that led them there. Nothing seems further from their expectations, than to find the Saviour's prophecy of His resurrection fulfilled. On the contrary, their whole conduct proves, that they confidently looked to see His corpse as Joseph and Nicodemus had left it. They brought sweet spices, that they might anoint and embalm the body, anxious to take the earliest opportunity, that their law allowed, of paying this mark of affectionate respect, without incurring the responsibility of ceremonial uncleanness.

John xx. 1.

Mark xvi. 1.

But the hour of the Redeemer's triumph was at hand; and, before they came, the pledge that He had given them was redeemed. "There was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." They fled affrighted to the city, went instantly to their employers, and told them what they had seen and heard.

Matt. xxviii.
2-4.

Ib. 11.

LECTURE XXI. Jesus came forth, "the first fruits of them that slept."

And then, too, from out those graves, which were rent asunder and exposed to view, at the earthquake that took place at the crucifixion,—then arose the bodies of many of the saints, long since, like good old Simeon, departed in peace: they "went into the holy city, and appeared to many;" witnesses, we may safely say, to some of their sin, in having despised and rejected their Redeemer; to others, that the salvation for which they had looked and longed had indeed appeared unto men; to all, that the miracle of the resurrection, thus worked upon Christ's saints, would, in God's good time, be performed also upon them.

Mark xvi. 2. The sun was rising when the women drew near unto the tomb: on their way they had been debating, how they should remove the stone from the door, "for it was very great;" covering, in all probability, the entire entrance to the inner chamber of the sepulchre, where the body lay. They doubtless thought, that, as the time of watch was past, the guards would have departed, and so they would have been left alone to perform a task, to which their strength was utterly unequal¹. When they came so close that they could look into the outer court, or chamber of the sepulchre, they saw that the guard was gone, the stone rolled away, and the door of the inner tomb open. Mary Magdalene, surmising that the body was taken away, without staying to inquire further, ran back to inform Peter and John; leaving her two friends to watch by the sepulchre till her return.

They, after a pause, anxious to know more about the body, ventured in: but scarcely had they set foot within the outer chamber, when they saw an angel sitting in a long white garment. At so unexpected a sight they were naturally affrighted; but the angel encouraged them, saying, "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified: He is not here, for He is risen:" adding, as an appeal to their remembrance of His own prophecy, "as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." "Go your way," continued

¹ Townson thinks, that the circumstance of the guard being appointed to watch, as well as the sealing of the stone, was managed so secretly, that the disciples had no suspicion of it. Townson's Disc. on the Evang. Hist. Paraphrase. Sect. ii. p. 18.

the angel, "tell His disciples, and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee. There shall ye see Him, as He said unto you:" again reminding them of His words,—words which, when uttered, were to them hard to be understood, and had probably been the source of much discussion amongst them.

LECTURE
XXI.

Matt. xxviii.
5, 6.
Mark xvi. 7.
Matt. xxvi.
32.

A peculiar instance of the Saviour's tenderness is here observable, in the selection of Peter's name. We cannot but suppose that the memory of that hour, when "Jesus turned and looked upon Peter" (the only reproof for his vain-glorious boasting, the only rebuke for his three denials), must have been a source of bitter anguish to the Apostle; and it needed this special mention to reassure the penitent, to convince him that he had not, by his desertion, entirely lost his Master's favour. Trembling, amazed, and joyful, they fled from the sepulchre to execute the angel's bidding.

Luke xxii.
61.

Matt. xxviii.
8.
Mark xvi. 8.

In the meanwhile Mary Magdalene had found Peter and John, and told them, "they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." At these tidings, Peter and John ran with all speed, to satisfy themselves of the correctness of a tale which seemed marvellous to them; "for as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead." John's youthful vigour got the better of even Peter's anxiety: he came first to the sepulchre; he stooped down; he looked in and saw the body gone, the linen folds in which it had been wrapped lying by themselves; but he feared to go in. Peter, however, immediately upon his arrival, entered, and saw besides, that the napkin with which the head had been covered was folded up and placed by itself; an incident recorded by the Evangelist and eye-witness St. John, as an incidental proof that the body had not been stolen by His disciples, who, as midnight plunderers, would have had neither the leisure nor the inclination to dispose all things in such an orderly manner. John, and beyond all question Peter too, "saw and believed." It was a dawning belief in the resurrection of their Lord, arising from the evidence of their senses, notwithstanding their own interpretation of the prophecies, relating to the Messiah, would have led them to a contrary conclusion. They departed: and, whilst the women were on their way to the Apostles, Jesus, who had previously

John xx. 2.

Ib. 9.

Ib. 6, 7.

LECTURE met and comforted the weeping and affectionate Mary, ap-
 XXI. peared unto them, saying, "All hail; and they came and held
 Him by the feet, and worshipped Him. Then said Jesus
 unto them, Be not afraid; go tell" (not my disciples but) "my
 brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see
 Me." But when they, and other faithful women, who had
 gone to the tomb in sorrow and returned comforted and
 assured by the angels, told these things, as they were bidden,
 to the Apostles and to the rest of the disciples, despair pre-
 vailed above belief: they refused to be consoled in their
 bereavement; "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and
 they believed them not." They were slow of understanding,
 and "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had
 spoken;" and it required the Saviour's own subsequent ex-
 position of prophecy to prove to them, that "Christ ought
 to have suffered these things" before He entered into His
 glory. Nay, even when those two disciples, to whom Jesus
 revealed Himself, returned to Jerusalem and told the eleven
 how that they had seen and recognized Him, receiving in re-
 turn the intelligence, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath
 appeared unto Simon;" there was even yet an under-current
 of unbelief amongst them all, resulting apparently from the
 difficulty, of reconciling their recent knowledge with their old
 prejudices: for, when Jesus Himself stood suddenly in the
 midst of their little assembly (the doors being shut for fear of
 the Jews) and said, "Peace be unto you," so far from instantly
 and joyfully believing, fear was their first and most predom-
 inant feeling. Their backwardness in yielding, even to the
 evidence of their senses, appears to have been founded, not
 upon a disbelief of the fact of the resurrection of the spirit of
 Jesus (for it was known amongst them, that three of their
 number had seen the glorified spirits of Moses and Elias),
 but upon the difficulty of comprehending the resurrection of
 the body. "They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed
 that they had seen a spirit." He calms their apprehensions,
 convinces them of His bodily as well as of His spiritual pre-
 sence, bestows upon them the blessing of His peace; and
 not to leave them without some tokens of His sanctifying
 influence, but even to invest them with a foretaste of that
 power which was presently to descend upon them, "He

Matt. xxviii.
9, 10.

Luke xxiv.
11.

Ib. 25, 26.

Ib. 34, 35,
36.

John xx. 19.

Luke xxiv.
37.

breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

LECTURE
XXI.
John xx.
22, 23.

Such is the evangelical account of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, and of His first appearance to His disciples. But St. Matthew honestly and fearlessly tells us, that the Jews have another version of the story; a version, adds the Evangelist, “which is commonly reported among them until this day.” They do not deny that the tomb was empty, the body gone, their watch baffled, their care frustrated; but, say they, “His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while the soldiers slept.”

Matt. xxviii.
11—15.

Let us examine the probable truth of this account. The circumstances of Christ’s death on the cross,—His burial,—the apprehensions, either feigned or real, of the chief priests that the body would be stolen,—the care that they took to prevent the theft,—the setting of a Roman guard,—the precaution of sealing the stone,—the counsel, perhaps the taunt of Pilate, “make it as sure as ye can,”—are facts equally admitted by friend and foe, by the Jewish priest as well as by the Christian Apostle. And yet, with all this care, the body is gone. If we are to believe the account of the Jews, we must suppose (to say nothing of many minor improbabilities), that the same men who deserted their Master on the night of His betrayal, (and, save one, never afterwards dared publicly to avow their attachment to Him,) the same men who were all along unwilling to believe in the possibility of His resurrection, and doubted the fact, even when others told them that they had themselves been witnesses to its truth,—the same men who met together in silence and in secret, for fear of being partakers in their Master’s sufferings, either crucified as sharers in His asserted sedition, or stoned to death as supporters of His presumed blasphemy,—we must suppose, that these timid and irresolute fishermen of Galilee were at night invested with a courage, such as they manifestly had not by day; that they braved all the terrors of detection in order to steal a corpse, which, when gotten, would only serve to confirm their worst fears, and to establish yet more strongly the downfall of their hopes. The production of the dead body could prove neither the resurrection of their Mas-

Matt. xxvii.
65.

LECTURE ter, nor His power of prophecy; on the contrary, it would
 XXI. negative the one, and falsify the other. It would be in vain for them to appeal to the fact of the resurrection as the groundwork of their preaching, as the very pivot on which all their arguments were to turn; it would be in vain for them to proclaim Jesus risen, as they did afterwards, unless there were those who could back their words, by proving that they had seen, heard, conversed with, and handled Him after His resurrection. This the possession of His corpse would never enable them to do.

But a very slight examination of the real facts of the case will prove to us, that they had not the power to commit the theft, even presuming that they had formed the design. Sixty Roman soldiers (the ordinary number of a guard) were stationed around and about the sepulchre. Had the disciples been ignorant of this precaution on the part of the priesthood, and had they drawn near for the purpose of breaking open the tomb and carrying off the corpse, they must have retired in dismay and disappointment at the sight. Had they been aware of the means adopted to baffle their attempt at deception, it would have been madness to have ventured on. How could they dare to brave the power, or hope to escape the vigilance of a well-armed, and proverbially well-disciplined force? Even had they spied from a distance (which, with the brightness of an Eastern moon at the full, they might well have done), and seen that none of them were on the move, but all lying down in different directions, the most sanguine of the disciples could not have hoped to find them to a man asleep, when they knew that it was death to a Roman to sleep upon his post, and when they had been cautioned to exercise peculiar watchfulness. It draws still more largely upon our credulity, to require us to believe, that the disciples would adopt so dangerous an experiment, as to venture within the circle of the soldiery, to ascertain the fact whether they were asleep or awake. Had but one out of the whole number been on the watch, their whole scheme must have been frustrated, and disgrace and death would have been the certain penalty for the attempt.

The Jewish sepulchres, it is well known, consisted of two chambers, one within the other. In this instance, a natural

cave seems to have been hollowed out and enlarged from the face of the rock, as is the case with many ancient Jewish tombs, visible at this very hour. In the inner, and more protected of these chambers, was the body laid: in the outer it was the custom for the relations to assemble, when they visited the tomb, to weep over the deceased. Listen to the Jew, then, and you must believe, that the Apostles passed unheard, and unnoticed, through the whole guard of sixty men, many of whom were, in all probability, quartered, as an additional precaution, in the outer chamber of the sepulchre: you must believe, that they removed the large stone from the door, broke the seal, uncovered the body from the linen bandages, folded up the clothes leisurely and composedly, and then retired with the body, without having been seen or heard; without having disturbed even one of all the sixty watchers. We are to believe, that they ventured thus much, not for their own profit, but for the credit of a man, whom, had they thus acted, they must have believed to be an impostor, who could not fulfil his own predictions of his resurrection, but left those, whom he had deserted and deluded, to execute by trickery that which he had promised to effect by power. "They would not," it has been well concluded, "make even the attempt, because they had no interest, or reason for doing it; they could not, for they had no power; they dared not, for they had no courage?"

LECTURE
XXI.
Maundrell's
Journey,
p. 104.
Carne's
Letters from
the East.

Townsend,
Serm. xxv.
p. 397.

Take up again the assertion of the Jew, "the disciples stole the body while the soldiers slept," and we may ask, if all slept, how could they have known what became of the corpse of Jesus, or who stole it? how could they testify to a fact, of which their own tale, nay, their own admission, proves them ignorant? If *one* was awake, why did he forbear from arousing his companions?

² See also the whole arguments ably summed up in Horne's *Introd.* vol. i. c. 4. s. 2.

Consult also Horsley's *Sermons on the Resurrection*, West's *Dissertation*, Townson's *Harmony and Paraphrase*, (which work has been mainly followed in this sketch,) Macbride's *Lectures on the Diatessaron*, in loc., and Sherlock's *Trial of the Witnesses*.

³ Justin Martyr relates, that the Jewish hierarchy sent messengers into all nations where their countrymen were established, to tell this tale of the theft of Christ's body, and so to prejudice them against the preaching of the Apostles. *Dial. cum Tryph.* 17, et alibi.

LECTURE
XXI.

No, we must conclude with the Evangelist, who mentions the fact, without stopping to prove a point which was notorious, that the priests called hastily a council; resolved, not only to forbear from bringing the matter before Pilate, but even to offer the soldiers a large sum of money, upon condition that they spread abroad the false report alluded to. But though they knew, that Pilate would be utterly indifferent as to any rumour of the resurrection of the Galilæan whom he had crucified, they were aware, that if he heard, coupled with it, a report that the soldiers were asleep upon their watch, he would be compelled to notice so flagrant a breach of discipline. They hoped, perhaps, that Pilate would have left Jerusalem before the tale could have reached him; and have gone back to Cæsarea, as was his custom at the end of the passover. At any rate, they promised the soldiers, that, if the governor heard it, they would find means to pacify him, and bear them harmless, for their confession of a capital offence. They had a hold upon the Roman; for his reluctance to execute a man, brought before him by the Jewish authorities upon a charge of rebellion against Cæsar's power, would have been ground enough of accusation with his jealous master: and this they knew, "So the soldiers took the money, and did as they were taught."

Matt. xxviii.
15.

Acts ii.
31—41.
iv. 4.

The conduct of the Jewish rulers, after the day of Pentecost, proves that even they were at last ashamed of the manifest inconsistencies of this sorry tale. When the Apostles suddenly reappeared upon the scene in a new character, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead; when convert after convert, to the number of eight thousand, bare witness to the power with which these delegates of heaven both spake and acted; however indignant the priests might have been, at finding themselves foiled in their revenge upon the supposed Galilæan prophet, however astonished at the extraordinary success and new-found courage of His followers, they dared not attempt to turn the tide of popular favour against them, by reviving the charge of theft which they had, at first, been so eager to put forth. They satisfied themselves with commanding "them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." Nay, even the Sadducees, to whom the doctrine of the resurrection, thus powerfully put forth,

Acts iv. 18.

would be peculiarly unpalatable, even they never venture now to assert that the Apostles laid its foundation upon a falsehood; even they, by their silence, bear unwilling testimony to the truth of the preaching of those intrepid men of God. And we know enough of the bitter hostility of Pharisee, Scribe, and Sadducee, to the pretensions of Jesus, enough of their hatred to the persons and doctrines of His followers, to be sure, that they would not have hesitated to press anew their old accusation of theft, had they not been aware, that the glaring improbabilities connected with the charge would have made their malice recoil upon themselves.

These, then, are the principal historical facts connected with the resurrection of our Lord⁴. But it is impossible for the most careless reader of the Apostolic writings not to perceive, that the disciples of Jesus looked upon this event in a far higher light than that of a well-proved fact. It was the main point upon which all their arguments turned, and to which all their appeals referred. Their earliest act after our Lord's ascension, was to elect, or rather to trust to God's electing, an Apostle in the room of the traitor Judas. They declared, at the same time, that it was necessary that one of those who "compained with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, . . . should be ordained to be a witness with them of His resurrection." So, too, in St. Peter's first sermon on the day of Pentecost, he was evidently anxious not only to shew by His miracles, and wonders, and signs, that "God had made that same Jesus whom they had crucified both Lord and Christ," but to prove the point by a reference to His resurrection; an event, by that time, suffi-

LECTURE
XXI.

Acts i.
16—22.

Ib. ii. 36.

⁴ The Jews were not alone in denying the resurrection of our Saviour. The Gnostics generally, believing Jesus to be a phantom, did not believe that He was actually crucified, and, therefore, would not believe that He had risen. "But Cerinthus, who held that Jesus was born like other human beings, found no difficulty in believing literally that He was crucified; and he is said also to have taught that He would rise from the dead at some future period." Burton's Bampton Lect. vi. p. 179. Dr. Burton thought it probable, that Cerinthus taught, that at the millennium "the body of Jesus would again be united to the Æon Christ, which would again descend upon Him from above; and thus it might be said that Christ, or rather Jesus Christ, would rise again to reign with His saints on earth." Ib. notes, p. 489.

LECTURE XXI. ciently well attested to put to silence the objection of the Sadducee, who denied the possibility of the doctrine in general,—and to put to shame the falsehood of the Pharisee, who strove to controvert the reality of this particular fact. The resurrection from the dead, through the power of Christ, formed afterwards the main topic of the Apostles' preaching. And when their prayer, that signs and wonders might be done by the name of Jesus for the confirmation of the faith, was answered from on high, when they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness, it was the resurrection of their Lord, to which the Apostles bare witness with such power. It was a main feature in St. Paul's preaching before the philosophers and voluptuaries of Athens : by that he strove to bring the worldly wisdom of the one into submission to the Gospel law, and to teach the other, that, "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." It was the avowal of his hope when brought to answer for his faith before the Roman governor Felix : it was an important position in his exhortations and his arguments to his Roman, Thessalonian, Philippian, and Corinthian converts.

Acts ii. 22
—36.

Acts iv. 2.

1b. 29. 33.

Acts xvii.
18. 32.

Rom. vi. 4.

Rom. i. 4.
xiv. 9.

1 Thess. iv.
14.

Phil. iii. 10,
11.

1 Cor. xv.

We cannot fail to pause and ask, why is so much stress laid upon this one doctrine? why do the evangelical writers so constantly appeal to it as being the very corner-stone of the Christian faith? It is, because the resurrection of Christ is the proof of the completion of that wonderful scheme of redemption, which was counselled by the Father before the foundation of the world; and further, because it is the only pledge of our own resurrection to eternal life.

See Lect.
xix. p. 217.

Heb. ii. 17.

As the great end of Christ's appearing in the flesh was, to repurchase the soul from the dominion of Satan, as well as to rescue the body from the impurity cast upon it at the fall, and so to redeem the whole nature of man, "it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren" in all things, sin only excepted : hence, He was conceived in the womb, and born of woman, was nurtured as other children, grew up to manhood, was subject to the pains and trials and sorrows of our fallen flesh : as man He submitted to death, as man He resigned His body to the grave ; whilst His soul departed to the spirits of the just made perfect, until the hour appointed

for its re-union with the body, and for the resurrection of both. Thus, as we look to Christ crucified as the earnest of our redemption, so we are privileged to regard Christ risen as the pledge of our resurrection. LECTURE
XXI.

Confess that Jesus rose from the dead, and we can believe, that the same power, which brought Him back to earth, can work a repetition of the miracle upon ourselves: the knowledge of what has been done in Him, added to the Scriptural declaration, that He “is the first fruits of them that slept,” ^{1 Cor. xv. 20.} unite in giving us a still stronger assurance, that His promises with regard to our own resurrection will be fulfilled to the letter; that, “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Ib. 22.

Deny the resurrection of Christ, and “then,” declares the Apostle, “is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” Ib. 14. “If,” says St. Chrysostom, “after death, He could not” (or did not) “rise again, then, neither is sin loosed, nor death taken away, nor the curse removed.” Chrys.
Hom. xxxix.
in 1 Cor.
xv. 14. s. 2. Well, then, might St. Paul conclude, “If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins:”—the last link would be wanting, in that chain of love, 1 Cor. xv. 17. that binds the Christian soul to its redeeming God.

LECTURE XXII.

Acts i. 9.

“And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up ;
and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

LECTURE XXII.

Tertull. de
Virg.
Veland. i.
de Præscript.
adv. Hær.
c. 13.
Adv. Prax.
c. 2.
Iren. l. i. c. 2.

It was not until towards the close of the second, or the beginning of the third century, that we find adopted in the Creed the full substance of the succeeding clause, “He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;” although, in the confession of faith drawn up by Irenæus, the bodily ascension into heaven of the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ is asserted.

King on the
Creed, p.
276—278.

And ample reason was there, at the time alluded to, for establishing this position as a fundamental point of faith; for there were those in that day, who, whilst they admitted that the soul of Jesus ascended into heaven, denied the fact with reference to His flesh. Apelles, a scholar of Marcion, (a disciple worthy of his master,) held that “our Lord, in coming down from heaven to earth, gathered unto Himself a body from the four elements, in which He was truly crucified, and, after His resurrection, shewed the same flesh to His disciples; after which, having finished the dispensation of His incarnation, He restored unto every one of the elements that which He had received from them, and so, dissolving His fleshly body, He ascended into heaven from whence He came.”

Epiphani.
adv. Hær.
in Hær.
Apell. l. i.
tom. 3. s. 3.
King, ut
supra.

It was probably for the purpose of confuting these wild fantasies, that the Creed reminds us of the fact of our Lord’s ascension, the closing scene of that dispensation which He had, for a season, left His dwelling-place on high to establish. Forty days the Christ remained on earth, after His resurrection; a number to which some mysterious meaning appears, more than once in God’s dealings with His creatures, to have

been attached. A portion of this time was passed in Galilee, LECTURE
XXII. where He had promised to meet His disciples, and whither, as Galilæans, they would naturally betake themselves at the end of the passover. They appear to have returned to their usual occupations; for some of them, as we read in St. John, John xxi. 3. resumed their former labours as fishermen on the lake of Gennesareth. He no longer, as before, spake openly unto the world; He did not even renew, with His chosen Apostles, those same intimate connexions which had marked their previous intercourse. He was satisfied with shewing Himself to them "alive after His passion, by many infallible proofs:" Chrys. in
Acta Apost.
Hom. i. s. 4.
Acts i. 3. He was no longer to them Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee; no longer the Messiah, as they had believed, in disguise, but the "prevailing Intercessor," whose own arm had brought salvation; who had seen of the travail of His soul and was satisfied; the Mediator, to whom all power in heaven and earth was given. "In His divine nature He had this power from all eternity; but it was now to be exercised in His human nature also, which, from a state of humiliation, from the form of a servant, was soon to be exalted to the highest dignity, and placed at the right hand of God." Matt. xxviii.
18.
Phil. ii. 7.
Porteus,
Lect. xxiv.

Eleven several appearances to His disciples are recorded in the evangelical writings; and, at these times, the Saviour's teaching seems to have been preparatory to that fulness of divine knowledge, which was destined, at no remote period, to be theirs. We are not left in entire ignorance of the nature of these divine lessons. He spoke to them "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:" "He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." At this time, we may suppose, He expounded to the Apostles as the future messengers of the covenant, even as He had done to Cleopas and his fellow disciple, "in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself." He explained to them, we may Acts i. 3.
Luke xxiv.
45, 46, 47.
Ib. 27. conceive, how the prophets had spoken, not alone of a glorious and triumphant, but also of a suffering and crucified Messiah; how these sufferings were required by God's justice

LECTURE for the sins of man, and how they were undergone by God's
 XXII. compassion (Himself being God manifest in the flesh) for the redemption of man. He entered thus at "large into the great evangelical doctrines of the atonement, of the redemption of mankind by His death, of the resurrection, of repentance, and the remission of sins through faith in His name." And further, He explained to them a doctrine which, throughout the whole of His earthly mission, had been such a rock of offence to the Jews, namely, the universality of the offer of redemption. He told them plainly, that the Gentiles were, according to God's appointment, equally to partake in the blessings of Christ's kingdom; that though salvation was in the first instance of the Jews, and the preaching of its glad tidings to commence in their metropolis, it was God's eternal purpose that it should be preached amongst all nations likewise.

Porteus,
Lect. xxiv.

It was then, too, that He solemnly invested them with the glorious privilege of becoming the messengers of this new and extended covenant; then that He gave them the power to bind and to loose, to remit and to retain sins; then that He instituted baptism, as a sign of acceptance of this covenant on the part of the converts, as a pledge of salvation on the part of the Saviour. It was natural that some misgivings should beset them, founded upon a consciousness of their own utter inability to accomplish these designs of their divine Master, and therefore He at this time renewed His promise, that they should be shortly "endued with power from on high," and that they should be witnesses of Him, not only in Jerusalem, and Judæa, and Samaria, but to "the uttermost part of the earth." It was needful that they should have this assurance, coupled, as it had been upon a previous occasion, with the promise, that they should be taught of the Spirit to remember all things, whatsoever their Lord had said unto them. It was needful: for how else (would be their natural argument) could they, all conscious as they must have been of the dim notions that they entertained, of the real nature of Christ's kingdom and of the true bearing even of His simplest lessons,—how could they oppose, single-handed, the several powers that had assailed, and, as far as human appearances went, had at last destroyed their Lord? "The disciple,"

John xx. 23.
Matt. xxviii.
19.
Mark xvi.
16.

Luke xxiv.
49.
Acts i. 8.

John xiv. 26.

Matt. x. 24.

they knew, "is not above his Master;" how then could they hope successfully to confront the tyranny of the Roman, the bigotry of the Pharisee, the subtlety of the Sadducee, the deep irreconcilable hatred of all? how could they apply the type, unfold the prophecy, explain the dark allusion, or confute the Sauls and Gamaliels of their day upon their own ground of theological lore; and they men of no repute, no learning, no station, with none of the ordinary advantages of life to back their efforts?

Since then, in a worldly sense, they had no natural qualifications to enable them to execute the commission of their Lord, it required some promise of Divine support, some assurance of the abiding spiritual presence of Him who was about bodily to leave them, in order that poor human nature might not sink dismayed beneath the difficulties in hand, and the dangers in prospect. It was given in the words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." LECTURE XXII.
Matt. xxviii. 20.

One human hope,—it was the last,—yet lingered in the Apostles' breasts: it was the hope that they so long had cherished, that which had buoyed them up throughout all the trials and mockeries that had beset them as disciples of the Nazarene, the hope of their national ascendancy. Since the predictions respecting the sufferings of Christ had been fulfilled to the very letter, and the end proposed by them gained to the full, they seem (not perhaps unnaturally) to have thought it possible, that the prophecies relating to His glory and His dominion were on the eve of their accomplishment; and the anxious question, the last that they ventured to put to Him, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" manifests their ardent desire for the hastening of that second advent, of the real nature of which, notwithstanding all their teaching, they were clearly ignorant. Acts i. 6.

And now the Saviour's earthly mission was hastening to its close: the charge, the counsel, the comfort to His chosen ones had been given; He had revealed His Father's will to men; He had set before them a perfect rule of righteousness; had shewn them the example of a spotless life,—so spotless, that even the infidel Roman was compelled to say, "I find no fault in this man." He had satisfied the penalty of the law to the uttermost, and had taken its obligations and Luke xxiii. 4.

LECTURE its curse upon Himself; He had fought and prevailed above
 XXII. the great enemy of man; He had blotted out "the hand-
 writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary
 to us, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and
 having spoiled principalities and powers, He had made a
 Col. ii. 14, shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."
 15.

Having thus "died for our sins, and risen again for our
 Rom. iv. 25. justification," He had amply borne testimony to the awful
 v. 18. meaning of His own words, "Father, I have glorified Thee
 upon the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest
 John xvii. 4. Me to do." It remained only for the Father to fulfil the
 Saviour's prayer: "Now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with
 Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before
 Ib. 5. the world was."

Its accomplishment was at hand. He led His Apostles
 out as far as Bethany, a spot which had already been the
 scene of one of His last and most striking miracles. "And
 He lifted up His hands, and blessed them: and it came to pass,
 while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried
 Luke xxiv. up into heaven." There was no delusion here: it was broad
 50, 51. daylight; He was conversing with them up to the very
 moment that He began to ascend; He was not suddenly
 removed from them, did not become invisible in an instant;
 they had leisure to watch their Lord ascending gradually,
 higher and higher, until the heavens opened to welcome their
 Acts i. 9. returning God, "and a cloud received Him out of their sight."
 Nor were they left to wonder, in doubt and apprehension,
 what this unearthly sight could mean. As angels were the
 heralds of His first advent, proclaiming, at His birth, the
 peculiar features of His kingdom, "on earth peace, good will
 Luke ii. 14. toward men," so angels were on the watch to receive Him
 at His departure, and to speak of the glories of His second
 coming.

"While they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as He
 went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel,
 which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing
 up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from
 you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have
 seen Him go into heaven." And thus was fulfilled the
 Acts i. 10, prophecy of David, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be
 11.

ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.”

LECTURE
XXII.

Ps. xxiv. 7.

It appears that the Apostles were the only witnesses of this scene of triumph. Why, it may be asked, why were not the Jews permitted to behold an event, which was so well calculated to set at rest all their doubts, to explain their misgivings, and to turn their blaspheming infidelity into grateful adoration? If we may presume to assign a motive for God's counsel in this respect, we may answer, that they had been appealed to, for the space of three years, by signs, and wonders, and miracles of such a character, as one would think might have stirred the conscience of the most determined infidel among them all. They had set at nought, had derided, had cast aside the appeal; why should they be yet further dealt with? the power of God's Spirit had been about them and upon them; they rebelled, and vexed Him, as their forefathers did of old; what marvel is it, if He refused to strive yet longer with them? they had despised and rejected the lowly Son of man, wherefore should it be given to them to behold the majesty of the glorified Son of God? whilst He was amongst them, “doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil,” although they were unable to deny the existence of the miracles before them, we know that they ascribed them to the power of sorcery. Acts x. 38.

Hardened as were their hearts, and determined as they were to deny the pretensions of Jesus, it is not too much to conclude, that even had He ascended from the very midst of Jerusalem,—even had Priest and Scribe, Pharisee and Sadducee, council and people, been eye-witnesses of His exaltation, it would have been productive of no greater permanent effect than the miracles which they had already seen, and endeavoured to explain away. It is to be feared, that the priests would have asserted, and the people believed, that it was but the closing scene of a long drama of successful imposture.

But it may be urged, it would at least have been a confirmation of the faith of the one hundred and twenty disciples, who had been the companions of Jesus from the beginning of His ministry, to witness the last earthly glory of Him whose steps they had followed so long and so confidently. See Acts i. 15. 21.

LECTURE XXII. It is enough to reply, that such was not the counsel of God ; the fact of the ascension was to rest upon the evidence of the Apostles, who could thus bear testimony to the truth of their Divine Master's prophecies on this very head. It was ordained that the rest, in this and many other matters, were to be satisfied with that evidence ; to believe, although they had not seen.

John xiv.
28.

The effect upon the Apostles is remarkable : it seems, that now they understood and acted upon their Master's words, "If ye love Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." Their doubts from that moment were set aside ; they recognized, and worshipped Him, as their God ; they returned to Jerusalem, to wait, according to His bidding, for the outpouring of the Spirit ; they returned,—but not in that sorrow for their real bereavement, which they had experienced at its prospect on the night of His betrayal. They went back with great joy, in the full faith, that all would be fulfilled that He had promised them ; "and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God." These were the same men, who, forty days before, had kept aloof from observation, had met by stealth and in silence, "for

Luke xxiv.
52, 53.

John xx. 19. fear of the Jews."

This triumphant close of our Saviour's ministry was the subject of prophecy, both on the part of Himself and others : we trace also its typical representation in the translation of Enoch, and the ascension of Elijah ; and still further, it was annually typified in one of the most remarkable of the Jewish ordinances, the entrance of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies. "As the High Priest did once, and but once, every year pass with the blood of the sacrifice through the tabernacle into the Holy of Holies ; so did Christ, having offered up Himself a sacrifice for sin, and with His own blood passed through this world below, enter into the highest heavens. And this is that which we call His ascension."

Ib. 17.
Ps. lxxviii. 18.

Compare
Ex. xxx. 10,
Lev. xvi.
15—17,
with Heb.
ix. 11, 12.

Beveridge in
Art. iv.
p. 175.
See also
Pearson, in
loc.

LECTURE XXIII.

ACTS i. 11.

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”

THE Creed further declares, that, as a consequence of Christ's ascension, He sitteth “at the right hand of God :” LECTURE XXIII.
an expression intended to indicate, that, when the everlasting Mark xvi. 19.
doors of heaven were opened and the King of glory entered in, He was welcomed to the highest place of honour and of dignity that those eternal mansions had to offer ¹. “God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” He hath “set Him at His own right Phil. ii. 9, 10.
hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet.” Ephes. i. 20—22.

Although the primitive fathers clearly assert the fact of the assumption of Christ's human body into heaven at the ascension, and as clearly speak of His partaking of His Father's Justin. Apol. i. 45.
Iren. l. i. c. 2.

¹ These expressions, “sat down,” “right hand of God,” are used, not to imply that God has a body, or limbs, or members, as we have, but to render God's actions more intelligible to our limited understandings, by explaining them through the medium of what we know and observe amongst ourselves. “By Christ's sitting at the right hand of God,” says Dr. Hey, “we mean that state of *dignity*, authority, equality of rank, which, according to our customary notions, would occasion a person to sit at the right hand of a great personage.” Lectures iv. 4. 18, and i. 19. 5.

The same observations will apply to those passages of Scripture which speak of God's being angry, of His repenting, and the like. They merely express the cause, in the Divine mind, of those effects, which, if they proceeded from man, would be explained by such terms.

LECTURE glory, Tertullian appears to have been the first who inserted, XXIII. in any confession of faith, the clause, "He sitteth at the right hand of God:" and since his time it has been generally adopted in others. It would seem that it was originally put forth, with a view to condemn certain fantastical notions entertained by some of the Gnostics; who, making the distinction before alluded to, between Christ and Jesus, admitted the ascension of the human body of Jesus into heaven, but denied that it was there accompanied by the spirit and power of Christ. They held, that it remained there in an unconcerned and inactive state, "void of sense and without Christ, as a scabbard is when it is without a sword." This heresy is directly condemned by the judgment of the Church, declaring, as it does in this clause, that, since His ascension, Jesus Christ is set down at the right hand of His Father; and implying, that He exercises His authority and power for the welfare and protection of His Church.

Tertull. de
Vel. Virg.
c. i. de
Præscript.
adv. Hær.
c. 13. adv.
Prax. c. 2.

Lect. xvii.
p. 189.

Tertull. de
Carne
Christi, 24.

See King on
the Creed,
c. v. p. 283
—286.

John xiv. 2.

Although the Creed, as being merely a compendium of the elements of truth, is silent respecting the office of Christ in heaven, enough is revealed in Scripture to prove to us, that it is one of a kindred spirit with His mission upon earth; one of love and mercy and good will to man. "I go to prepare a place for you," said the Saviour to His disciples when His hour was come, and He was about to offer Himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of our fallen race. He was returning to His Father, as the good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep, that He might open the way for His redeemed flock, through His awful advocacy, through His intercession, through the pleading of the merits of His blood, in behalf of those sins which caused it to be shed. There are few times at which we so sensibly feel the littleness of our own intellect, and are so conscious of the narrow boundaries within which our Creator's wisdom has confined it, as when we would fain endeavour to comprehend the full nature of this mysterious intercession, this communing between the Father and the Son upon the acceptance or rejection of the souls of men. It is enough to know, that "we have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;" "holy, harmless, and undefiled," one who "ever liveth to make intercession for us."

Heb. viii. 1.
Heb. vii.
24—26.

What has been revealed to us of Christ's advocacy with the LECTURE
XXIII.
Father is singularly adapted to our wants, peculiarly calculated

to hush our misgivings, and to set at rest those fears which must come across the Christian soul, when it reflects on the requirements implied in the Saviour's counsel, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. v. 48.

Which of us can hope to reach this high standard of Christian purity? to be perfect even as our God is perfect? The holiest saint that ever lived before the Lord cannot but say with Job, "If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." Job ix. 20.

Beset, then, with infirmities, as we are,—unspeakable is our comfort to know that there is One on high who is "touched" with their feeling, in that He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He is our Advocate, who Heb. iv. 15.
has known the pressure of human wants, who has felt the 1 John ii. 1.
agony of human woe, who has experienced the force of even more than human temptation. He pleads in heaven for the pardon of our manifold transgressions, who, when on earth, even whilst He endured the "contradiction of sinners against Himself," implored thus touchingly for their pardon, "Father, Heb. xii. 3.
forgive them; for they know not what they do:" a gracious Luke xxiii. 34.
assurance to us, that, if He could plead for those who rejected and murdered Him, His advocacy will not be wanting for those more faithful ones who love Him. And this our effectual Mediator, who "by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," is "from henceforth expecting, till His Heb. x. 14.
enemies be made His footstool;" until sin and death and 1b. 13.
Satan, His spiritual enemies, shall be subdued and destroyed, See Pearson,
until the whole race of unbelievers, His temporal adversaries, in loc.
shall have fallen before the uplifted banner of the Cross.

And this mighty work, this conversion of the universe to the Gospel faith, began from that moment, when the Son of man sat down at the right hand of the Majesty of the Father: its first-fruits were shewn in the increased faith and joy of the Apostles, when they returned to Jerusalem, from beholding the glory of their departed Lord; it was carried on, on the day of Pentecost; its advance was evidenced in the conversion of thousands upon thousands in those times, when, through the witness borne by the Holy Ghost to the Apostles' deeds

LECTURE

XXIII.

Acts xix. 20.

and preaching, "the word of God grew mightily and prevailed;" and it has gone forward, slowly perhaps, as men count slowness, but surely, according to the unsearchable counsel of God. Already the march of intelligence has kept even pace with the progress of Christianity: even now may we trace the gradual accomplishment of God's prophesied designs, in new and unexpected openings for the admission of Gospel truths, —in fresh opportunities of preaching to the unenlightened pagan the glad tidings of salvation. And it will, it must go forward. What, though ages may even yet have to pass away, before the perfection of Christ's spiritual victory; what, though all things are not yet put under His feet; what, though the "heathen" may "rage," and "the people imagine a vain thing;" though "the kings of the earth" may "set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed," "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision!" He hath declared the decree; the Lord hath said unto His Christ, "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." What, though no more than a third part of the world is, as yet, even nominally Christian, whilst in some regions the lamp of life, once kindled by the energy of a Peter or the labours of a Paul, is utterly extinguished, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness;" He hath pronounced His resolve, and man cannot retard its accomplishment,—“Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth!”

Ps. ii. 1—8.

2 Pet. iii.
9.

Ps. xlv. 10.

The succeeding clause, in which it is asserted that Christ "shall come again to judge the quick and dead," opens to us a field of most interesting enquiry.

From the earnestness with which the ancient Fathers dwell upon the second coming of Christ to judge the world, and from the indignant severity with which they reprove the heretical and antinomian opinions of their day upon this stirring theme, it would seem probable, that the clause in question was inserted in the Creed, in order to mark the feeling, and to record the judgment of the Church, upon so important a point of doctrinal and practical theology.

It was needed: for Marcion, and his followers, declared that God was too merciful to consign His creatures to the flames of hell; too gentle, to desire to engender fear; too tender, to prohibit the indulgence of the passions, except in words alone: thus leaving to the voluptuary the free exercise of his carnal will. And there were others, as Basilides and Valentinus, who held that faith was the prerogative of nature; that they were predetermined to be saved; and, therefore, it mattered little what was the irregularity of their lives; they were elected to faith and salvation, and had a licence to be wicked, by reason of their perfection: and although they did sin, yet that they should necessarily be saved by virtue of their natural election. In fact, the general opinions of the Gnostics, even though they might not go all lengths with these unchristian theories, led practically to much the same conclusion. For, by advocating the doctrine of fatalism, and by denying that men should be judged according to their works, they virtually did away with the necessity of the judgment day.

LECTURE
XXIII.Tertull.
adv. Marc.
l. i. c. 27.Iren. l. i.
c. 23.Clem. Alex.
Strom. l. ii.
p. 363.
ed. Sylbur.See King
on the
Creed, c. v.
p. 301—307.

In direct confutation, then, of these heresies, it was intended to assert in the Creed, that, when Christ's mediatorial office was accomplished, "the quick," or those who should be alive at the coming of our Lord, and all others who shall have died from Adam to that hour, should be summoned to appear before Him as their everlasting Judge.

The fact, then, of Christ's second coming thus established, it remains to see, what light Scripture sheds upon the several circumstances connected with it. Awful indeed is the language of Holy Writ, when it speaks of the moral and spiritual condition of the world at that momentous period. Although the Gospel must first have been preached "as a witness unto all nations," before the end shall come, the tenor of Scripture compels us to conclude, that there will be few then found who will say with a sincere heart, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace!"

Matt. xxiv.
14.

Rom. x. 15.

We gather from our Saviour's words, that the same infidel spirit, which upheld the ungodly before the flood, will be again at work, to encourage the transgressors of that day in their rebellion against the Lord. "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For, as

LECTURE in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and
 XXIII. drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day
 that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not, until the flood
 came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of
 the Son of man be." It is prophesied withal, that "there
 shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own
 lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for,
 since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were
 from the beginning of the creation." The long-suffering of
 the Most High will once more be urged, to prove His indif-
 ference to human guilt. Because, to men's eyes, His ven-
 geance will slumber; because, as in the days of Israel's ini-
 quity, He will seem again to say, "Ephraim is joined to idols,
 let him alone,"—they will exclaim, with the infidel in David's
 time, "God hath forgotten: He hideth His face; He will
 never see it."

This predicted indifference to the second coming of Christ
 is the more remarkable, when we bear in mind, that though
 "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation," and
 though "of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man²,
 no, not the angels in heaven, but the Father only," yet, there
 will be manifestations of such an extraordinary character, as
 to arrest the attention of all, who are desirous to watch and
 pray, lest their Lord, coming suddenly, should find them
 sleeping. If we may regard the destruction of Jerusalem as
 typical of that of the world, then it would seem, that the
 same signs, which preceded that awful event, will be given
 a second time, to indicate another and more fearful visitation.
 We shall again hear of "wars and rumours of wars;" nation
 shall once more "rise against nation, and kingdom against
 kingdom;" and there shall be, as there were of old, "famines,
 and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places: these shall
 be the beginning of sorrows;" reminding us that, though
 the end be not yet, it will not be far distant. Although,
 perhaps, much remains yet to be accomplished before that
 hour, it must be an unobservant eye that cannot or will not

² It was an old opinion amongst the Jews, that the world is to last six thousand years; two thousand before the law, two thousand under the law, and two thousand under the Messiah; and that the seventh thousand will be the millennium. See Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 319, 1st ed.

mark the gradual fulfilment of some, at least, of these prophesied signs. Even in our own day, enough is done to remind the Christian, that he must set his house in order; enough to make him watch for the appearance of the sign of the Son of man, with the same devout anxiety that bade the Magi look for the manifestation of that star, which was to pre-signify His earlier advent.

Explicitly as Scripture lays down the fact, and points out the signs of Christ's second advent, so clearly does it also speak of the effect. Taking the Revelation of St. John as our guide, it would seem, that the immediate consequence of this advent will be the fulfilment of that magnificent train of prophecies, which speak of the might, the glory, and the universality, of the dominion of the Messiah. Then may we look for the literal accomplishment of that predicted perfect victory over Satan's power, to which the divine St. John alludes, when he says, "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." Rev. xx. 1—3.

"Strong figures of speech," says Bishop Newton, "to shew the strict and severe restraint which he should be laid under, that he might deceive the nations no more, during this whole period." Newton on the Proph. vol. iii. p. 314.

Then may we piously believe, that by some miraculous exertion of Christ's power, personally manifested upon earth, He will destroy all that oppose themselves to the Gospel, and establish a dominion, the extent of which shall be equalled only by its blessedness. "There was given Him," says the prophet Daniel, when commissioned to lift up, in part, the veil that shrouds the yet undiscovered future, "There was given Him, dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. vii. 14.

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It will be a kingdom, into which all nations of the earth will press and be admitted; for it is written, "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts:" a kingdom of mercy; for "all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:" a kingdom of spiritual wisdom; for, in that day, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea:" a kingdom of privilege; for it is one that Christ has promised to share with that illustrious army of saints and martyrs, who, like the glorious three in the plains of Dura, have never bowed them down before the image of worldly conformity, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. At one time we are told, that "the dead in Christ shall rise first;" and that those, "which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall they ever be with the Lord:" at another, it is said, that "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." And then, it is written, "He shall send His angels," (always glad ministers of His will,) "and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." And so shall be realized, in its most extended sense, that apparently contradictory declaration of our Saviour, "The meek shall inherit the earth." This is that reign of peace and concord, of which the prophet spake; but for the fulfilment of which the Jew had looked at a much earlier period: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child

shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt LECTURE XXIII.
nor destroy in all My holy mountain." Is. xi. 6—9.

Another important event will be concurrent with this reign of peace and glory; the conversion of the Jews, and their re-establishment in their native land. Scattered, as they now are, over every quarter of the globe; despised, scorned, persecuted; tied down by penal statutes, oppressed, for bearing the very name of Jew, by almost every nation throughout Christendom, in turn,—the blood of the crucified Sufferer has indeed, according to their imprecation, been heavily on them and on their children. But it has been poured out as a Matt. xxvii. 25. sacrifice of salvation for the Jew, as well as for the Christian. "It shall come to pass in that day," says the Prophet, "that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the Islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the Is. xi. 11, 12. Ezek. xxviii. 25, 26. xxxix. 25—29. Amos ix. 14, 15. earth." Then, too, shall Jeremiah's words be accomplished to the letter, when they shall welcome "the Lord their righteousness," and say, "The Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither He had driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land." Language is exhausted in describing the glories of regenerate Jerusalem: and even royalty itself is spoken of, as pressing forward to aid in the pious task of working out God's designs; in rebuilding her now desolate and ruined palaces. "The sons of strangers," says Isaiah, "shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in My wrath I smote thee, but in My favour have I had mercy on thee." "Whereas Jer. xxiii. 8. See also Is. xiv. 1, 2. thou hast been forsaken and hated," the holy man afterwards adds, "so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations: and thou shalt know that I, the Lord, am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob." The Jew will then bow Ib. 15, 16. See also Zech. viii. 20—23. Micah iv. 6—8. down before that cross, which once he hated and despised; he will become a preacher of that doctrine which in earlier

LECTURE
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Hosea iii.
4, 5.
Zech. xii.
9, 10.
Churton's
Bampt.
Lect. s. vii.
Croft's
Bampt.
Lect.
p. 203.
Van Mil-
dert's
Boyle Lect.
Serm. xii.
p. 379.
Horsley on
Isa. xi. 10.
Bibl. Crit.
vol. ii. p. 82.
Rev. xix. 1.

days was a stumbling-block, and a rock of offence; and he will own as God the very Being, whom his forefathers crucified for the assertion of Divinity. "Nothing, then, seems more certain, than that the Scriptures clearly foretell the conversion and restoration of the Jews, and that a most satisfactory pledge of the fulfilment of those predictions is already given, by what has actually been brought to pass in their dispersion and preservation." Then shall the universal Church of Christ be as "an oracular temple, to which all nations shall resort; filled, like the temple at Jerusalem, with the visible glory of the present Deity." Then shall all families of the earth burst forth into that hymn of joy, which the sainted John heard in his mystic vision,—“Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.” And the voice of those adoring multitudes shall be “as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderrings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

Ib. 6.

Such are the glories and the privileges foretold in Scripture as the portion of God's elect, who shall live and reign with Christ at His second coming. “This,” says St. John, “this is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” It was further revealed unto the holy man, that “the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years are finished.”

Rev. xx. 6.

Ib. 5.

When the thousand years shall have expired, (for which period it is prophesied that the reign of peace and blessedness shall endure,) Satan will be again let loose for a season, to work his power upon those who are willing to receive him. “As he deceived our first parents in the paradisiacal state, so he shall have the artifice to deceive the nations in this millennial kingdom; to shew that no state or condition upon earth is exempted and secured from sinning.” To this will succeed God's judgment upon Satan, and his consignment to the everlasting flames of hell; “and the devil that deceived them,” says St. John, “was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and

Ib. 7.

Newton on
the Proph.
vol. iii.
p. 328.

shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Then will follow the general resurrection; when "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." It will be indeed a solemn and an awful hour, when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;" when the "earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." To the righteous it will bring the final reward of the soul, long since justified through the merits of its Redeemer; the acquittal of the body, recalled from its state of corruption; the reunion of both in a renewed and glorified state: and thus they will be admitted to the extraordinary privilege, of becoming themselves co-judges both of angels and of men.

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XXIII.
Rev. xx. 10.

2 Cor. v. 10.

2 Pet. iii. 10.

1 Cor. vi. 2.

But who shall dare to tell the agony of the wicked in that dreadful day, when the prophet's vision shall be realized? "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Rev. xx.
11—13.

Then, too late, shall they endeavour to hide themselves "in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;" and say unto the mountains and rocks, "fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;" trembling, yet expecting to hear the sentence, which shall consign them as everlasting tenants to the regions of the damned, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Rev. vi.
15, 16.

Matt. xxv.
41.

But glorious indeed, on the other hand, is the description given by the sainted John, of the blessings that God has laid up in store as the eternal reward of them that love Him. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more

LECTURE sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming
 XXIII. down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned
 for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven
 saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He
 will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God
 Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God
 shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be
 no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall
 there be any more pain: for the former things are passed
 away.”

Rev. xxi.
1—4.

That such are the revelations of Scripture, is beyond dispute: the words speak for themselves: the only question is respecting their interpretation; some understanding these prophecies to have a literal, others contending for a figurative meaning. “The doctrine of the millennium,” says Bishop Newton, “was generally believed in the first three and purest ages; and this belief, as the learned Dodwell hath justly observed³, was one principal cause of the fortitude of the primitive Christians; they even coveted martyrdom, in hopes of being partakers of the privileges and glories of the martyrs in the first resurrection.”

Newton on
the Proph.
vol. iii.
p. 325.

Dial. cum
Tryph. 51.
80. 139.
Tertull. adv.
Marc. iii. 24.
Papias apud
Euseb.
l. iii. c. 39.
Iren. v.
31—35.
Euseb. l. iii.
c. 28; see
also Bur-
ton's Bamp-
Lect. vi.
p. 177.

Justin Martyr speaks of it, as being the orthodox doctrine of his day. Tertullian, Papias⁴, Irenæus, all early writers, allude to it, as the Christian's dearest hope; and, though some discredit has been flung upon the doctrine itself, by the sensual gratifications with which Cerinthus and others imagined the millennium would be characterized, the careful student of the

³ “The primitive Christians believed, that the first resurrection of their bodies would be in the kingdom of the millennium. And, as they believed that that resurrection would be peculiar to the righteous, so they believed that such as were martyrs would have the principal share in it. Since these things were thus believed, it is impossible to describe the influence it had upon the confessors of that age to covet martyrdom.” Dodwell, Diss. Cyprian xii. de Martyrum fortitudine, sect. 20, 21 (Quoted in Bp. Newton).

⁴ Eusebius, writing at a later period, alludes to the opinion of Papias, only to condemn it as visionary, and as an erroneous interpretation of the mystical meaning of Scripture.

It may be questioned whether Eusebius is correct, in asserting that the authority of Papias (whom he describes as a man of small judgment, σφόδρα σμικρὸς ὢν τὸν νοῦν) led Irenæus to adopt the same views. That acute champion of the faith was a man more likely to think and to judge for himself, than to follow in the wake of others.

early Fathers of the Church, will not fail to mark the chastened and Scriptural views which they entertained of this prophesied event. And surely the candid enquirer will not condemn the hope itself as unscriptural, because it has been sullied by the blasphemous vagaries of the earlier ages, and by the wild and visionary theories of a later period⁵. But presumptuous as it would be to pronounce decidedly upon a point, respecting which the wisest and the best have doubted, some few reasons may be derived from the past literal fulfilment of prophecy, to make us pause, before we reject the idea of the as literal fulfilment of that which is announced to come⁶.

To say nothing of the extraordinary accomplishment of prophecies, connected with the fortunes of individuals and the destinies of nations, some of which were, beyond all doubt, singularly improbable at the time of their delivery, let us come at once to the consideration of those which refer exclusively to the Messiah.

See Lect.
viii. p. 77.

We find in the Old Testament a series of revelations, delivered from time to time throughout many ages, which the Jews, to whom they were given, universally understood as referring to the Hope of Israel. The apparently contradictory nature of these prophecies has been already noticed. It will be sufficient then for the present purpose to bear in mind, that the personage alluded to in them is at one time spoken of as a despised, at another, as an exalted character. How did the Jews, for centuries the only guardians of these revelations, understand them? The answer will best be found in the history of Jesus of Nazareth. Whatever might have been the faith or hope of individuals, we know that, as a nation, they looked for the literal fulfilment of the predictions of glory and conquest, whilst they put a figurative interpretation on those which related to Messiah's shame and death.

Lect. xvi.
p. 176, 177.

Thus, if the worldly Jew had dwelt upon that passage in

⁵ See the account of the "Fifth Monarchy Men," given in Mosheim's History, vol. v. p. 364.

⁶ "All the divine predictions have been faithfully fulfilled in the events they designated to occur, which relate to times anterior to us. Those which belong to our period are now in visible and correct fulfilment; and these facts leave no doubt on the impartially-reflecting mind, that what are specified as relating to periods posterior to our own, will be accomplished with equal accuracy and certitude." Sharon Turner's Sacred Hist. of the World, vol. iii. let. 42, p. 591

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Isaiah, which spoke of his Deliverer being born of a virgin, he would have said, "Impossible, it is contrary to nature: the prophet means thus allegorically to describe Messiah's purity and exalted character." If, again, his attention had been arrested by the fifty-third chapter of the same prophet, he would probably have understood the predictions as strong figures of speech, referring to His exceeding condescension in visiting and redeeming His people. And it is a truth too well known to require further comment, that, at our Saviour's manifestation in the flesh, there was scarcely a Jew who did not believe, that his expected King would be literally stained with the blood of His vanquished foes; scarcely one who would have thought it possible, that prophecy had not figuratively spoken of the sorrows, the rejection, and the murder of his promised Lord. But the narrative of the New Testament proves to us, that the Jew was altogether wrong in thus interpreting, literally, so much of Scripture, as coincided with his old prejudices and the temporal exigencies of his nation, and in explaining away, as allegorical, that which he could not comprehend, or would not receive. All the prophecies respecting Christ, that have hitherto been fulfilled, refer to His first coming: they have been accomplished to the letter. What are we to say, then, of the remainder? are we to fall into the same error which we are now ready to see, and to condemn, in the Jew? and are we to pronounce that faith wild and visionary, which takes warning from the past, and hopes, that the predictions descriptive of His second coming will be accomplished to the letter likewise? If so, then we act afresh the part of Adam, who thought that God was not in earnest, but spoke in a figure of speech, when He declared, "If thou eatest of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt surely die;" then we countenance the sin of those

Gen. ii. 17.

⁷ "Nothing is more evident," says Bp. Newton, "than that this prophecy of the millennium, and of the first resurrection, hath not yet been fulfilled, even though the resurrection be taken in a figurative sense, . . . which yet the text cannot admit without the greatest torture and violence." And again he says, "In the general, that there shall be such a happy period as the millennium . . . in a word, that the kingdom of heaven shall be established upon earth, is the plain and express doctrine of Daniel and all the prophets, as well as of St. John; and we daily pray for the accomplishment of it in praying, 'Thy kingdom come.'" Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 315. 317.

before the flood, who mocked at the preacher of righteousness, and thought his denunciations of God's coming vengeance were not to be taken in their simple acceptation; then must we acquit the Jew of more than half his stubbornness, in refusing to take warning by the explicit threats of national and individual woe, uttered by Moses and a host of succeeding prophets; then, to be consistent, we must cease to quarrel with the Jew, if he takes up the same licence with ourselves, if he declares the Evangelists to be in error,—asserts that Jesus of Nazareth was not the Messiah of the Scriptures,—that the close resemblance between certain passages of His life and the prophecies of the Old Testament was an accidental coincidence, not an actual fulfilment of God's word. If the Christian calls the twentieth chapter of the Revelation an allegorical representation of the Almighty's future dealings with His Church and with the nations, and not a literal prophecy of events yet unaccomplished,—why, by the same rule, may not the Jew declare the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to be a figurative illustration of certain points in the Messiah's character, although the life of Jesus of Nazareth permits us to look upon it, as the truth of ancient prophecy evidenced by the facts of Gospel history? Whence is our right to make Scripture bend to our prejudices, instead of reverently bowing down before its records as the very oracles of the unerring God? Surely it were wiser, to say the least of it, to put a literal interpretation upon Holy Writ, wherever it can be done, and only to resort to a different mode of exposition, when the sense and the context manifestly require it. And even this licence should be used with extreme caution; remembering the warning of the Apostle Peter, “that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation: for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

2 Pet. i.
20, 21.

But, whatever may be the true interpretation of the predictions relating to Christ's second coming, it is impossible to read any allusion to the fact of His reappearance, without seeing how the holy writers speak of it, as of that which must infallibly exercise a powerful influence over the Christian's heart, and hopes, and conduct. He is taught to look to it with the same eagerness and anxiety, with which the Jew

LECTURE was bidden to regard His earlier advent. Is the Christian
 XXIII. soldier tempted to slumber on his post, instead of fighting the
 good fight of faith unto the end? His second manifestation is
 held out, by Christ Himself, as an incentive to wakefulness and
 watchfulness: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day
 nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Is the Christian
 sufferer tempted to be impatient under the dispensations of
 Providence; to doubt God's care because His hour of rescue
 tarries, to question His love because His hand lies heavily, as
 he thinks, upon him? "Be patient, brethren," says St. James,
 "unto the coming of the Lord. Behold," continues the holy
 man, "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the
 earth; and hath long patience for it, until he receive the
 early and the latter rain: be ye also patient; stablish your
 hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Is the
 Christian pilgrim tempted unduly to love the world, and to
 run riot in the use of its comforts and enjoyments? "Let
 your moderation," says St. Paul, "be known unto all men.
 The Lord is at hand; be careful for nothing." Is the Christian
 disciple tempted sometimes to forget, that God will have no
 divided reign, and that without holiness no man can or shall
 see His face hereafter? "What manner of persons," says the
 aged Peter, "ought ye to be in all holy conversation and god-
 liness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day
 of God?" Is the Christian mourner tempted to sorrow, even
 as the worldly, without hope? to grieve unduly over the loss
 of friends or kinsfolk? it is not alone to the prospect of an
 eternal reunion that he is bidden to look forward; the Apostle
 does not merely console him with the assurance, that he will
 hereafter meet them in those realms of peace, where the
 "wicked cease from troubling," and the "weary be at rest;"
 the expectation of the glorious day of his Redeemer's second
 advent is the bright star of hope, to which he bids the
 bereaved Christian turn his eyes for comfort.

If the conscience whispers too surely and too truly, that our
 daily converse is any thing but that which befits the Saints of
 God; if the heart acknowledges with remorse, that we have
 not acted as members of that "peculiar people, zealous of good
 works," whom the Lord of glory came to purify and save;—it
 is true, that the thoughts of His second coming, to subdue all

things under His feet, can speak no sound of comfort, can convey no idea of privilege to our souls: there must rather be LECTURE
XXIII. "a certain fearful looking for of judgment" and of wrath to Heb. x. 27. come; rather the earnest desire to look upon these things as fanatical and visionary, than to long for their realization, as the believer's hope and joy.

But if, like the faithful Apostle on the eve of his departure, we so yearn for and love our Lord's appearing, that we can truly say, "even so, come Lord Jesus;" if our hearts burn within us, as we take up these certain promises of holy writ;—we have, even here, in our communion with the Father of our spirits, a foretaste of that glory which shall be revealed hereafter. Well, then, may we long for the return of our Redeemer, no more the "despised and rejected of men, the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;"—no more the lowly Galilæan prophet, whom some pronounced a sorcerer, and others looked upon as one possessed; but "the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." The day of His advent will be that of our privilege: the day of His triumph, that of our reward. Let us pray, then, in the sublime language of our liturgy, "that it may please Him of His gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of His elect, and to hasten His kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of His holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in His eternal and everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

2 Tim. iv. 8.
Rev. xxii.
20.

Is. liii. 3.

Is. ix. 6.

Burial Ser-
vice.

LECTURE XXIV.

JOHN xiv. 16, 17.

“I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth.”

LECTURE XXIV. IT has been already noticed, that, with reference to the Third Person of the Trinity, it was not until the appearance of the Macedonian heresy in the fourth century, that the Church deemed it necessary to insert in her confessions of faith any thing beyond the simple declaration, “I believe in the Holy Ghost.” “There was not,” says Lord King, “so great a controversy in the primitive Church concerning the Divinity and Person of the Holy Ghost; for though the Gnostics, and some others, blasphemed Him, yet their assaults were more furious and violent against the Father and the Son; which obliged the Church to use her greatest care for the preservation of that part which was most exposed and attacked.”

King on the
Creed, c. vi.
p. 318.

But, simple as is this declaration, the doctrine implied in it is so interwoven with the consideration of God's past dealings, present mercies, and future dispensations, as to demand more than a passing notice of the Third Person of the Trinity. It will remain, then, to consider some few scriptural proofs of His Divinity: next, to investigate the nature of His agency before the establishment of the Christian covenant; the fulfilment of our Saviour's promise to His Apostles, on the day of Pentecost; the continuance of that promise to the whole Christian world; the blessings and responsibilities attached to that continuance; and, lastly, we must endeavour to ascertain whether there be any test of God's indwelling presence in the soul, more certain than the impression that we may be, or the persuasion that we are, “led by the Spirit,”

Rom. viii.
14.

and so God's children in the highest and most endearing sense of the word. LECTURE
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It would seem scarcely possible that any dispassionate person, sitting down to the perusal of the New Testament with an anxious desire to arrive at a consistent knowledge of Divine truth, could be blind to the many passages in which Christ Himself, as well as His Apostles, speaks of the Personality and Divinity of the Holy Ghost. St. Peter, in punishing Ananias and Sapphira for their falsehood, uses the expressions, "lying to the Holy Ghost" and "lying to God," as equivalent terms. The Holy Ghost is said to be "eternal," to "teach all things," to "guide into all truth," to "shew things to come," to "search all things, even the deep things of God," to "make intercession for the saints," to "change us into the same image with Christ," to "bring all things to remembrance," to "reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Christ Himself calls the Holy Ghost "another Comforter," to be sent in His stead, or to supply His absence: and St. Paul attributes to the Holy Ghost the communication of a great variety of qualities and powers; "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; to one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." In all these passages the Holy Ghost is plainly spoken of, not merely as a quality, or operation, but as a Person. If, therefore, the Holy Ghost be God, as well as the Father and the Son, and there be but one God, it follows that the Holy Ghost "is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God."

Nor was this belief in the Divinity of the Holy Ghost the growth of later and less orthodox ages, as some would fain persuade us. It was the doctrine of the earliest Christian writers, of the disciples and immediate successors of the Apostles. Clement "attributes life, and anxiety, and active agency, to the

Acts v. 3, 4.

Heb. ix. 14.

John xiv. 26.

xvi. 13.

1 Cor. ii. 10.

Rom. viii.

27.

2 Cor. iii. 18.

John xiv. 26.

xvi. 8.

John xiv.

16.

1 Cor. xii.

4. 8—11.

Tomline on

Art. v.

Heber's

Bapt.

Leet. i.

p. 37, and

note.

Clem. Rom.

apud Basil.

de Sp.

Sancto.

c. 29. s. 72.

LECTURE XXIV. Holy Ghost, in the same manner as to the Father and the Son." Ignatius "describes the Apostles as rendering a like obedience to all the several Persons of the Trinity. And the blessed Polycarp, in his expiring prayer, as preserved by those brethren of the Church of Smyrna who attended his captivity, and wept around the flames of his martyrdom, gives glory to the Holy Ghost in almost the very words of our present doxology."

Ignat. ad
Magnes.
c. 13.
Ecel.
Smyrn.
Epist. do
Polycarp.
Mart. c. 14.
Heber's
Bampt.
Lect. ii.
p. 77.

Although the Gospel is the peculiar dispensation of the Holy Ghost, in that it was established by His miraculous agency, and is still supported by His invisible arm; and though we find in the New Testament clearer revelations of the part that the Holy Spirit bears in the economy of God's household; still, in the earlier dispensations, we can clearly trace the agency of the same Spirit, and recognize Him, generally, as the guardian of the world, whilst we look to Him, specially, as "the Ruler and Defender of the Church of Israel."

See Heber's
Bampt.
Lect. iv.
p. 206.

The first distinct operation of the Holy Ghost, traceable in the records of God's dealings with the world, is to be found in the Mosaic account of the creation. When the designs of the Everlasting with regard to the structure of the universe were in the course of their accomplishment, the Spirit of God is represented as the immediate means of executing the counsel of the Father, and the declarations of the Son. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters:" a quickening and invigorating process, analogous to that by which He implants divine life into the dull soul, as yet unawakened to a sense of its high moral capacities, and still higher spiritual privileges. Nor is it difficult to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to the general mode of the Spirit's subsequent operations in the antediluvian world. From the expression, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," we see that His Spirit had so striven, had pleaded with them, warned, counselled, and reproved. We may safely say then, that before the flood God's Spirit was, as now, a witnessing Spirit: even then were given those means of grace, those opportunities of repentance and of improvement, which in these days are more fully developed, and more distinctly explained, in the Gospel covenant.

Gen. i. 2.

Ib. vi. 3.

A remarkable expression, in the book of Genesis, not only puts before us a clear evidence of the agency of the Spirit, but would seem to indicate, that, in the days of Joseph, the Pharaoh of that time had some higher and juster notions of Divine superintendence, than we might have expected to meet with in the sovereign of a nation, in part at least, idolatrous. Was it, that some faint glimmerings of that knowledge of God, which was common to all tribes of the earth up to the time of their dispersion at the building of Babel, still shone, though dimly, through the dark legends of the Egyptian priesthood? was it the remembrance of one title of Divinity,—and that too the most indicative of His all-pervading influence,—a title which survived the memory of His purer worship? was it this, or was it the immediately overruling power of God, that made Pharaoh speak of Joseph, as of “a man in whom the Spirit of God” was¹? Whatever might have been the extent of Pharaoh’s knowledge, whether he spoke from his convictions, or through an unconscious power of prophecy, the fact remains the same: it was God’s Spirit that gave to Joseph a prophet’s wisdom, and a prophet’s power.

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XXIV.

Gen. xli. 33.

In a subsequent passage in the history of the children of Israel, we perceive the Spirit of God interposing, in order to enable human agents to work out the Divine counsels, by the bestowal of superhuman power; and that too in a matter in which, at first sight, He might not have been expected to interfere, but to have left them to the free exercise of their own natural talents, enhanced by that energy which the consciousness of working in God’s cause must, almost of necessity, impart. After Jehovah had given to Moses a series of detailed instructions, respecting the minuter portions of His ceremonial worship, “See,” said the Lord, “I have called by name Bezaleel; and have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all

¹ In making this allusion, Pharaoh used the same words to express the “Spirit of God” that are found in Genesis i, 2. viz. רוח אלהים.

LECTURE XXIV. manner of workmanship." Nor is this to be regarded merely in the light of an interesting fact, relating exclusively to the Divine economy of former dispensations. Although the Jewish ceremonial law be done away, now that the more perfect revelation of God's will is made known to man, yet the mind of Him who gave the one for a season, and established the other for ever, remains essentially the same. God, who of old vouchsafed to lay down every particular connected with the form, the ornaments, and the services of His tabernacle,—God, who invested those, whom He had chosen for His work, with His own Spirit, to enable them to accomplish it,—God cannot, at any time, be entirely indifferent to the piety of those who are jealous for His honour, even in externals; and who are more anxious to give of their abundance, or of their little, to insure the seemliness of His temple, than to promote the decoration of their own abodes. Nor can He be utterly unregardful of those, who think it not "a time to dwell in their cieled houses, when His house lies waste;" and who are anxious to act upon the sound rule, that meet worshippers are seldom found in a neglected temple.

Throughout the whole history of the Jewish theocracy, in its origin, its support, its conduct, we trace the influence of the same Divine Person: at one period instigating those agents, whom from time to time He raised up as the instruments of His will, to defend or settle the institutions of their country; at another, as in the case of Balaam, overruling the wickedness of man, changing curses into blessings, and constraining the lips even of the ungodly, to bear unwilling testimony to Jehovah's truth and power. It was God's Spirit that rested upon the seventy elders, whom Moses, at the Divine command, associated with himself for the better regulation of the internal polity of Israel, imparting, doubtless, a wisdom and discretion beyond the limits of their natural powers: it was God's Spirit that nerved the arm of the Jewish leader Joshua: the same Spirit, by His more awful name of Jehovah, that came upon Othniel, upon Gideon, upon Jephtha, and upon Samson, delivering foe after foe into their hands, and enabling them to rescue God's people from the tyranny of the Moabite, the Canaanite, the Midianite, and

Exod. xxxi.
2—5.

Haggai i. 4.

Numb. xxiv.
2.

Ib. xi.
17—25.

Ib. xxvii. 18.
Judges iii.
10.

Ib. vi. 34.

Ib. xi. 29.

Ib. xiii. 25.

the Philistine. It was the same Spirit that was with Saul, and was transferred from him to David, in consequence of his disobedience². It is clear, therefore, from this, that, though God's Spirit was the tutelary and inhabiting Spirit of the Holy of Holies, both in the tabernacle and in the first temple, and, in that sense, an abiding Spirit with His people generally, it rested upon individuals only when they followed after His counsels, or were especially moved to the execution of those great designs, to which their own natural powers were manifestly inadequate. It was then, as now, the Lord's counsel, that His Spirit should abide with man, only so long as this temple of the body was made a meet receptacle for its heavenly guest. He was a Spirit, then, of comfort to the godly, but of rebuke to the unrighteous and profane.

LECTURE
XXIV.
1 Sam. x.
6—10.
Ib. xvi.
13, 14.

But there was another way in which the Spirit of God strove and pleaded with His chosen people. The hope of the future Saviour, first promised to Eve in the hour of her punishment, was to be perpetuated; God's will and word were to be recorded as a testimony to succeeding generations; laws, both divine and moral, were to be established on such an undeniable authority, that no future cavillers might be able, in the fair course of argument, to gainsay or to resist them; warnings, counsels, threats, all were to be given; the destinies of future nations were to be partially unfolded. And so we find the Spirit of God, at one time inspiring holy men to commit to writing the results of their divine illumination; at another, appealing to prophecy fulfilled, as an earnest of the certainty of prophecy to be accomplished: now speaking of the glories of the Saviour; now unfolding the mysterious tale of His humiliation and rejection; instigating them, at one hour to encourage their countrymen to godliness, by lifting up the veil from the Everlasting's hidden mercies; at the next, to deter them from sin, by laying bare the record

² See, more particularly, the account of the rejection of Saul (1 Sam. xv. 22—26), and the effect of this rejection in the following chapter. When Samuel anointed David king, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward . . . but the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." (1 Sam. xvi. 13, 14.)

There is apparently no difference between רוח אלהים and רוח יי, as the promise of the Spirit given to Saul (1 Sam. x. 6) under the latter title, is fulfilled at ver. 10, under the former.

LECTURE of His unfailing judgments. Thus we have the Holy Spirit,
 XXIV. working both by historical and prophetic inspiration, and bequeathing his divine counsels as a legacy of love to all succeeding generations; "that the man of God," having the example of past ages as his warning and his guide, "may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

2 Tim. iii.
15—17.

2 Pet. i. 19.

See Heber's
4th Bampton
Lect. p. 225.

The prophetic dispensation closed with Malachi; and with it ended all inspired notice of the operations of the Holy Ghost in the Jewish polity. But the fulness of God's time was at hand: the designs into which angels desired to look were ripe for accomplishment: and, if the old Jewish opinion be correct, that under the form of Gabriel (which is, by interpretation, "the strength, or active power of God,") we are to understand the presence, not merely of an angel, but of the Third Person of the Trinity; then we shall see how God's mercy and His power are at one, in announcing to His chosen ones the coming glories of Messiah's kingdom. Then shall we recognize the Holy Ghost standing by the altar of incense, and shewing to Zacharias the glad tidings that He was commissioned to reveal: we shall see Him too in the chamber of Mary, announcing to the lowly maiden, that God had selected her as the virgin mother of the expected Christ. Blessed of the Lord indeed, and privileged withal, was that family, in whom the gifts of the Holy Ghost were again manifested to the world, after a cessation of four hundred years; and blessed too that faithful pair, the pious Simeon and the holy Anna, to whom it was given to see the Lord's Christ, and to prophesy, as of old, in the power of the Most High, of the future mission of that infant, who was "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel."

Luke ii.
25—38.

From this time, until the visible outpouring of His gifts on the day of Pentecost, it is not difficult to ascertain the part sustained by God's Spirit. We are expressly told of the fulfilment of the promise, that John the Baptist should be "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb;" for "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit." And, when the day arrived that he began to preach "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," it was in the power of the same Spirit that he took up his ministry, and warned his countrymen to "flee from the wrath to come;" "to bring

Luke i. 15.

Ib. 80.

forth fruits worthy of repentance;" and not to think, that the bare fact of an unbroken descent from Abraham was, of itself, a sufficient title to the blessings inseparable from an entrance into the kingdom of God.

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Luke iii.
2—8.

In like manner, with regard to the young Jesus, we are told that He "grew, and waxed strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." And as Christ was perfect man, as well as perfect God, so the imparting of the grace of the Spirit seems, in His case, to have followed the same analogy, as it ordinarily does with ourselves. The Divine grace was in Him an increasing grace, the means of an advancement in spiritual wisdom and communion with God, until the coming of that hour when Jesus was baptized, as a preparatory step to taking up His ministerial office. It was then that the fulness of the Holy Ghost rested upon Him, and He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness, to commence those encounters with the prince of darkness, which ended in the triumph of the Saviour, and the rescue of the sinner.

Luke ii. 40.

Luke ii. 52.
Cf. Eph. iv.
15.
Coloss. i. 10.
1 Pet. ii. 2.
2 Pet. iii. 18.

Matt. iii. 16.
iv. 1.

It was in the power of the Holy Ghost, as Jesus Himself testifies, that He performed those miracles which identified Him with the Messiah of prophecy. And surely it was in the same power also, that He promised to His disciples the gifts of that Spirit with which He was filled, under the peculiar and endearing title of the "Comforter;" a promise not limited to them individually, but which was meant to be the distinguishing heritage of the true followers of the Saviour in every age and country.

Compare
Luke xi. 20.
Acts x. 38.

"There is yet, however, another occasion," says Bp. Heber, "on which the words of Scripture give us reason to believe that the influence of the Holy Ghost was immediately and conspicuously exerted; during the night, I mean, of Christ's interment, and during His resurrection from the dead."

Heber's
Bampt.
Lect. iv.
p. 229.

"I am well aware," continues this learned writer, "of the reasonable doubt which may exist, whether the Spirit whereby, according to St. Peter, Christ was quickened, be understood of the Third Person in the Trinity, or of our Lord's own immortal nature. Nor do I forget, that the Son of Man has ascribed the act of His resurrection to Himself, as an immediate act of His own Divinity. But we also learn from St.

LECTURE XXIV. Paul that He was raised from the dead by the same glorious Person who regenerates us to newness of life, and by whose agency, according to the Jews, our own dust and ashes shall hereafter be formed anew into the likeness of the Lord from heaven. Nor can we better reconcile these seemingly conflictive statements, than by the belief, that as all the Persons of the Trinity were concerned in this awful resuscitation, so He, more particularly, who is the soul of the material world, and its preserving and pervading Providence,—by whose sole operation the body of Jesus was framed in the Virgin's womb,—and by whom, as by the finger of God, the Messiah wrought His wonders, was active, on the present occasion, in undoing the work of death, and in preparing the deserted body of Christ for the return of its Divine Inhabitant.”

Heber, ut
supra, p.230.

LECTURE XXV.

ACTS i. 8.

“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”

IF we may judge from the altered conduct of the Apostles after our Lord's ascension, it would seem probable that in the interval between the resurrection and that event, amongst other holy lessons, He had explained more fully to them the nature and influence of the Comforter, or Paraclete, whom He had promised to send them from the Father. It must have been a more than common teaching on His part, and a more than ordinary faith on their's, which could have so spiritualized their views of His mission, as to have bidden them to return with joy from witnessing an event, the very mention of which had before filled their hearts with sorrow and dismay. It must have been the expectation of a more than human blessing, which “could dry the tears of the children of the bride-chamber, when the bridegroom had been so recently taken from them;” especially when they had every reason to believe, that the days were at hand, wherein their Master's clear declarations would be fulfilled to the letter,—“they shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”

LECTURE
XXV.
See Lecture
xxii. p. 255,
256.

Heber's
Bampt.
Lect. i. p. 4.

John xvi. 2.

Their first act, as a body, proves that even now the Spirit had begun His mighty work within them, though the fulness of His power was yet to be developed. They assemble in an upper chamber, and, after prayer and supplication that God may guide them in their choice, they proceed to elect an Apostle to fill up that vacancy in the divinely-appointed number of twelve, which had been made by the apostasy of the traitor Judas. Two points deserve our notice in the circumstances of this election. First, the unreserved confidence

See Lect.
xxi. p. 251.

LECTURE XXV. which the Apostles shew in their divine Master's promised support ; for the very mention of the name of Judas, and the necessary allusion to his betrayal of their Lord, must have made them sensibly alive to the risk that (humanly speaking) they ran, in bringing another associate into their body. What protection had they, that their newly-chosen comrade might not (as Judas had done to his Master) betray them to their enemies ? They must have been well aware that the priesthood, exasperated afresh at the rumoured re-appearance of Jesus, would eagerly embrace the opportunity of crushing at a blow all hope of the revival of His pretensions, by the destruction of His followers. And secondly, we cannot fail to notice the singular accuracy with which these hitherto uneducated men are able to apply the prophecies to the case immediately before them. The same Apostle, who, but lately, understood not enough of the Scripture to know that Christ should rise from the dead, now appeals to that Scripture, which must needs have been fulfilled, "concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."

Compare
John xx. 9.
with Acts i.
16—20.

Burton's
Lect. on
Eccl. Hist.
Lect. ii.
p. 45.

Acts i. 7.

Joseph.
Antiq. l. xi.
c. 5. s. 4.
xv. c. 11.

The day of Pentecost was fully come ; and "they were all with one accord in one place:" assembled, as was even now their custom, for the purpose of prayer and praise, on that day of the week which, in honour of the resurrection of Jesus, was henceforth the destined Sabbath of the Christian. "There is no reason to think," says Dr. Burton, "that the expectation of any thing extraordinary had brought them together on that day." It was not given to them, to know the times and seasons that the Father had appointed for the manifestation of His grace. Some have conjectured, that the room, in which they were assembled on this occasion, and at the election of St. Matthias, was an apartment over the porticoes of the temple ; and Josephus speaks of many such being within the holy precincts. "If it could be proved that these upper chambers were open to all persons who chose to occupy them ; or if there was reason to think that persons of the same nation, who attended the festivals, made use of these apartments for want of more private accommodation, then we might perhaps conclude that the Apostles and their company, being all of them Galilæans, had taken possession of one of these chambers, and there, without molestation, or

suspicion, laid the foundation of that religion which was to rise upon the ruins of the very building where they met¹." Be this as it may, it could not have been at any great distance from the temple where they met on that memorable occasion, as all the attendant circumstances will shew.

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Burton's
Lect. on
Eccl. Hist.
l. ii. p. 41,
42.

"And suddenly, there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting: and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." From that moment the Apostles were new creatures: they assembled on that eventful morning, with no settled plan of action; their views of the fundamental principles of Christianity, though much enlarged since their last interview with their Saviour, still, probably, not thoroughly defined. But they came forth from that chamber, as from out the presence of the Lord, the baptized delegates of Heaven, the commissioned messengers of the Most High. They were conscious of the change that had come over their spirits; they knew that their Master's promise was fulfilled: now burst upon them, in all its glory, the magnificent scheme of redemption, counselled before the world began, and completed on the cross of Calvary: now understood they all their Lord's hard sayings, by which they were formerly bewildered: now they perceived the twofold character of the Christ, as laid down by the prophets; and how it behoved Him to rise from the dead, before He entered into His glory. They came forth to the multitudes who were gathered together in the courts of the temple, crowded at that time with worshippers,—for it was the hour of morning prayer, and, moreover, the last and most solemn day of the feast of Pentecost. They advanced to those throngs who heard the noise, and saw the flame. It was a momentous

Acts ii.
2—4.

¹ Jos. Mede mentions a tradition, that the room, in which the Apostles were assembled on this occasion, was the same "upper chamber" in which our Lord ate the last supper with them; the same where, on the day of His resurrection, He appeared to His disciples; where He appeared to Thomas; where James was appointed bishop of Jerusalem; where the deacons were elected and ordained; and where the first Apostolic council was held; and from that time dedicated as a Christian Church. Mede's Churches, &c., quoted in Dr. Hook's Last Days of our Lord's Ministry, p. 39, 40. 1st Ed.

LECTURE epoch in the annals of the world: the preaching of the cross
 XXV. began. Well might the "devout Jews," who, as St. Luke
 tells us, were gathered together there, "out of every nation
 under heaven," marvel as they listened. Well might the
 multitude, whom the rumour of these things had drawn
 quickly to the spot, be partakers in their astonishment. They
 saw twelve men, known to all as Galilæans by their speech,
 and recognized probably by many, as the rude and humble
 followers of the celebrated prophet of Nazareth, who for three
 years had attracted their attention and awakened their hopes,
 and who, at the last passover, was crucified by the Romans,
 in compliance with the clamours of the people;—they saw
 them, with the impress of God's visitation as visibly stamped
 upon them, as it was upon Moses when he came down from
 the mount, fresh from the immediate presence of Jehovah.
 They heard them speak, every man in his own native tongue,
 "the wonderful works of God; and they were all amazed,
 and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth
 this?" The native Jews, to whom the sound of foreign
 languages would appear, at first, little more than an unintel-
 ligible noise, full of hatred against the Apostles as Galilæans²,
 and perhaps too of suspicion, as knowing that they were fol-
 lowers of Jesus, immediately make a mockery of the miracle,
 and accuse them of drunkenness. Peter, to whom the first
 fruits of Jewish as well as of Gentile conversion had been
 distinctly promised, for his confession of Jesus as Lord and
 Christ,—Peter stands boldly forward, repels the calumny, and
 addresses the multitude, in a stirring and eloquent discourse;
 reproving, rebuking, and exhorting, yet "with all long-suffer-
 ing." We can well imagine the deep attention with which
 they listened to the intrepid Apostle's appeal. It has been
 conjectured, that in this instance, "the nature of the miracle
 was changed, and though St. Peter used the common language
 of his country, it seemed to each of his hearers as if they
 heard their own."

The Apostle shews them, first, that this outpouring of the
 Spirit was in accordance with the prophecy of Joel. He then
 boldly puts forth the doctrine of a suffering and crucified

² On the hatred borne by the Jews against the Galilæans, see Milman's
 Bampton Lectures, p. 93—95.

Exod.
 xxxiv.
 29—35.
 2 Cor. iii.
 13—16.

Acts ii. 12.

Ib. 13.

Matt. xvi.
 18.

2 Tim. iv. 2.

Burton's
 Lect. on
 Eccl. Hist.
 ii. p. 49.

Joel ii.
 28—32.

Messiah, and shews that this view of His character was in accordance with the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; a doctrine singularly distasteful, considering the existing prejudices and political position of the Jews. Still more dangerous must have been his language, when he proceeded to declare, that He, whom they had but lately seen dragged through their streets as a criminal, pursued by the loud clamours of the mob,—He, whom the Roman had executed at their demand, was the Messiah, “God manifest in the flesh.” He brings to their remembrance the many testimonies, that God had given of His approval to His Son, during His sojourning amongst them; he appeals to their own knowledge of the many benefits He had conferred upon them by the “miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of them.” He points to the prophecies which spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah (and therefore of His previous death), and tells them, that Jesus had thus risen from the dead; that it was He of whom the prophet spake, and that thus was fulfilled a prediction which was before a mystery to them. It is observable, that the Apostle does not stop to *prove* the point of the resurrection: he speaks of it as a well known and well attested fact, which no one could deny: and we may be well assured that, if in that hour the priests could have gainsaid it, they would eagerly have done so, when so favourable an opportunity was offered them, of counteracting the effects which St. Peter's address was calculated to produce, by bringing forward evidence to shew, that he had asserted as a fact that which was literally a fraud. The Apostle tells them, further, that He had ascended into heaven, was exalted at the right hand of God, and that it was He who, according to His promise, had shed forth that Holy Ghost, the effect of whose manifestation they both saw and heard. “Therefore,” concludes St. Peter, “let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Acts ii.
14—36.

The power with which the Apostle spake³, his ready and

³ It appears from ver. 40, that St. Peter's discourse extended to much greater length than the address recorded in the Acts, which may be considered more in the light of the heads of his sermon, than as an exact transcript of what was actually delivered upon this occasion.

LECTURE XXV. convincing application of Scripture, the manifest proofs of

Divine agency that rested upon him, and upon the other Apostles, were not without their influence upon the people: "they were pricked in their heart, and said, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Remorse stung the native Jew, and conviction dawned upon the stranger. The one could not forget that he had called down upon himself, and on his children, the curse of that innocent blood: the other, free from all personal share in the murder of the Just One, could not but admit the close application of the prophecy; and the miracle before their eyes would, naturally, go far to confirm them in their new faith.

Three thousand souls confessed Jesus to be the Christ, and were baptized as an evidence of their repentance and their belief: the mystical symbols of Christ's body and blood were received by the converts: "and fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles." It is remarkable, that, in the earliest congregational acts of the first members of the primitive Church, we trace the fulfilment of the angel's prophetic description of the true spirit of Christianity, as given at our Saviour's birth; "on earth peace, good-will toward men." We see them also acting upon that test of Christian membership, laid down by the Saviour Himself;—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another:" for we read, that "all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

How are we to account for this extraordinary reaction in the feelings of so large a portion of the Jewish people? that they should not only forego the common selfishness of our nature, but listen with temper to these Galilæans, when they presumed to teach the seed of Abraham such unpalatable lessons? to tell them that all their long-cherished hopes were so many delusions, grounded upon an entire misapprehension of the whole tenor of prophecy: that their Messiah had been amongst them, and they knew Him not: that He had preached to them, and they had mocked Him: that He had warned them, and they had derided Him: that He had taken up the character of the Christ, as foretold by the pro-

phets, and they had cursed Him as a blasphemer, rejected Him as an impostor, and put Him to death as a malefactor? LECTURE
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These, one would think, were bitter, nay, dangerous truths, to put forth at a time, when the city was scarcely yet recovered from the wild tumult, that had attended the capture and crucifixion of Jesus. And yet, there were three thousand men amongst them, who were so convinced of their error, as to brave all fear of persecution, by siding with the Apostles, by discarding their old prejudices, and by acknowledging the prophet of Nazareth as the Christ.

It was not only that the over-ruling power of the Holy Ghost stamped conviction and conversion at once upon their minds: there had been other feelings, silently but effectually at work, which rendered some of them at least not indisposed to receive the testimony of the Apostles, backed, as it was, by such manifestations of supernatural power.

We can readily understand, how the jeers and reproaches that arose, when our blessed Saviour was first uplifted on the cross, were gradually softened, and finally hushed, when portent after portent bare witness to the innocence of the Holy Sufferer: we can easily conceive, that an important change came over the spirits of many, who, when they saw these things, smote their breasts, and returned to Jerusalem.

Lect. xix.
p. 224.

There must have been to them many an anxious hour, and many a sad foreboding, when the first passionate fever of excitement had passed away, and they had leisure to reflect calmly on all that they had done. They would converse, one with another, upon these awful scenes; they would recall to mind the darkness and the earthquake; they would speak of the strange story of the Temple's veil rent asunder by an invisible hand; they would tremble, as they related, how, three days after the crucifixion of the Galilæan, some of their own friends and kinsfolk, whom they had themselves committed to the tomb, arose from out their graves, appeared to many, and declared, that it was through Him that they were permitted to revisit the earth. These things, and the rumours, that would doubtless reach them, of His resurrection and re-appearance, would compel them to feel remorse for their ingratitude, and fear for its probable consequences: they would engender something more than a suspicion, that

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they had done neither well nor wisely, in clamouring for the death of one, who certainly was no common personage; and who, as certainly, had shewn, that He had many points in accordance with the prophetical character of the Christ. They would remember also, when too late, that His innocence was declared by the false disciple who betrayed Him, by the timid judge who delivered Him to the malice of His foes, by the very heathen officer who superintended His crucifixion; whilst those, who so determinedly worked His ruin, were unable to prove a single charge against Him. And when their sick were expiring around them, and they knew that the hand was cold which so many times had raised them up; when their lepers were uncleansed, and no friendly voice to say, "Be thou clean;" when the maimed, the halt, the blind, the crippled, the possessed with devils, cried in vain for Him who had so often proved His power over every human malady;—it was then, we may well conceive, that some touch of natural feeling would plead with many amongst them, and compel them to mourn bitterly over their too hasty zeal. Thus, in the breasts of several in Jerusalem, there were latent sparks of a religious faith, which only required some such exciting cause, as the visible presence of God's power upon Pentecost, to fan them into a burning and an abiding flame.

To enumerate the thousandth part of the miracles, by which the Holy Ghost advocated the doctrine of Christ crucified for our redemption, and risen for our justification, would be to transcribe no small portion of the ecclesiastical history of the early ages of the Church. One feature, however, in these extraordinary operations of the Spirit, is too remarkable to be passed over: it is the power which the Apostles had of conferring these spiritual gifts on others, for the confirmation and establishment of the Churches that they had planted; a power, the exercise of which must have convinced both Jew and Gentile of the divine authority of the Apostles, even more forcibly than the performance of individual miracles; a power, which the most hardened infidel could scarcely venture to ascribe to sorcery, still less to imposture.

The gifts, too, themselves were of such a nature, so varied in kind, so peculiarly adapted to the several circumstances

under which they were conferred, and to the persons upon whom they were bestowed; so surpassing the ordinary mental and physical powers of even the most gifted men, that few could refuse to admit that the finger of God was there. LECTURE XXV.

St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, refers to these gifts, and enumerates the most conspicuous. "There was 'The word of wisdom,' the talent of arguing from the natural principles of reason, for the conversion of philosophical infidels. 'The word of knowledge,' the talent of holding learned arguments from the ancient prophecies, and the writings of the Old Testament, for the conversion of Jewish infidels. 'Faith,' a depth and accuracy of understanding in the general scheme of the Christian revelation, for the improvement and edification of believers. 'The gifts of healing,' and 'the working of miracles,' for the purpose of making new converts, and displaying the extent of the power of Christ. 'Prophecy,' or the talent of foreseeing future events⁴, for the purpose of providing against the calamities, whether worldly or spiritual, that might threaten particular Churches; such as famines, pestilence, wars, persecutions, heresies. 'Discerning of spirits,' for the better government of the Church. And 'the gift of tongues,' and 'the interpretation of tongues,' which seem to have been very generally dispersed, that every Christian might be qualified to argue with the learned Jews in the synagogues from the original Scriptures, especially when the Jew thought proper to appeal from the Greek of the Septuagint to the Hebrew text." If the Apostles acted upon the same general rule, that apparently influenced their Divine Master in the selection of themselves, and conferred this power upon the poor, the lowly, and the uneducated, the testimony thus afforded by it to the truth of the Gospel would be still more striking, and the effect of its exercise yet more convincing.

¹ Cor. xii.
8—10.

Horsley,
Appendix
to Ser. xiv.

And how strong an evidence of the reality of this miraculous agency do we find, in the total change that took place in the mind, the feelings, and the character of the Apostles,

⁴ Macknight does not limit the gift of prophecy to the talent of foretelling future events. "The gift," he says, "was a general name for the speaking by inspiration in a known tongue, to the instruction of the Church, whatever the nature of that inspiration might be." On 1 Cor. xiv. 3.

LECTURE after the day of Pentecost; the dawn of that change com-
 XXV. mencing from the time of our Saviour's investing them with
 the ministerial office, and breathing upon them a portion of
 His own blessed Spirit. It will have been seen, in the course
 of these Lectures, that, during their Lord's life-time, the
 very allusion to His sufferings was enough to draw down the
 remonstrance of the Apostles, so completely were they filled
 with the national hope of a triumphant and an abiding
 Messiah. Now, they preach Christ crucified, and prove
 from the Scriptures, that so it was ordained, in accordance
 with the wonderful scheme of redemption through Him.
 His shame is no longer a stumbling-block; it is their glory:
 His death is their hope: His resurrection, their assurance:
 His ascension, the confirmation of all. Formerly they were
 bewildered by the hard sayings of Jesus; His applications of
 Scripture, His references to the prophets, His allusions to
 types, were, one and all, incomprehensible mysteries. Now,
 they shew themselves perfect masters of the sacred writings;
 able to explain, and to apply them in a manner that none of
 their adversaries were able to gainsay or to resist. The
 most learned and subtle of the Jews were out-argued, and
 put to silence, by the fishermen of Gennesareth, the publicans
 of Galilee, the artisans of Capernaum and Nazareth. In
 their Lord's life-time they trembled before the influence
 of the priesthood, and shrank appalled from the fury of
 the populace. When apparently bereft of His protection,
 they come boldly forward, and brave the very powers before
 which they quailed: they put forth openly those self-same
 doctrines, which He had implied, rather than explained,
 and that too with the peril of His life. And when they are
 commanded to speak and teach no longer in the name of
 Jesus, "Whether it be right in the sight of God," is their
 answer, "to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge
 ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen
 and heard."

Acts iv.
 17—20.

Changed thus in opinions, in abilities, and in courage,—no
 trace left of their former selves, except their deep-rooted
 affection to their Master,—we can scarcely recognize the
 timid Apostles in the bold uncompromising champions of the
 cross,—in the men, whose unwearied feet have traversed every

clime, and out-braved every obstacle, to bear the message of LECTURE XXV. salvation to a world dead in trespasses and sins,—the men, who, with every human chance (so to speak) against them, have effected “a moral and religious revolution, equally un-Milman's Bampton Lect. i. p. 2.precedented in earlier, and unparalleled in later ages.” Amply did the great Founder of their faith bear out His own promise, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” And amply has He, as the Advocate of the Acts i. 8. self-same faith, redeemed His pledge, that the Spirit of the Most High should be an abiding Spirit with His Church; Matt. xxviii. 20. “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

LECTURE XXVI.

Acts ii. 39.

“The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

LECTURE XXVI. THE absolute necessity of the miraculous interposition of the Holy Ghost, to defend and advance the infant Church of Christ, is too self-evident to require any lengthened arguments for its proof. The slightest glance at the natural character of the Apostles will convince us, that they had neither the ability nor the courage, nor indeed any adequate motive, to enter upon missionary labours of an extensive character.

Lect. xxii.
p. 257.

But there was one difficulty, connected with the first propagation of the Gospel, which no power short of miraculous could have surmounted, whatever might have been the natural gifts or acquirements of its earliest preachers. It was the difficulty of carrying the message of the covenant to distant and unknown regions. Even supposing the Apostles had been singularly learned men, brought up, every one of them, at the feet of the Gamaliels of their age, and so trained in all the wisdom of the Jews; had they been masters of all their traditions, thoroughly versed in their method of interpreting and applying Scripture;—although they might have succeeded in gradually overcoming the prejudices that beset them as Galilæans, and in eventually obtaining from the Jews a patient hearing for their unpalatable doctrines, yet these qualities would have stood them in but little stead, when they ventured beyond the limits of their native land, and attempted to implant in other countries their adopted faith.

The highest extent of philological acquirements could not

have initiated them into all the niceties of the languages and dialects of the “uttermost parts of the earth,”—nor have enabled them to speak with that fluency which was requisite, if they wished to convert, not individuals, but nations to the Gospel. A superficial acquaintance with these matters would have been then, as it is now, a bar to conversion upon any extensive scale. The most elaborate knowledge of all the current literature of the day, whether Greek or Roman, would have been of but little avail, when they penetrated into the remote wilds of Africa, Scythia, or India. The most perfect understanding of the Scriptures, the highest conceivable power of interpreting their dark allusions, would have been no help to them, in acquiring that thorough insight into the religious belief, the ancient prejudices, and time-honoured superstitions of those unknown lands, which would have enabled them to anticipate and to answer every objection, as it arose in the minds of their respective hearers. Paganism in those days, as in our own, underwent different modifications in different countries; it was an ever shifting system: and the difficulty of gaining any accurate information upon these points was such, as we, with all our modern advantages, can scarcely appreciate to the full. We must remember, that we are not speaking of times, when printing had rendered the communication of knowledge a comparatively easy task; nor of days, when the researches of a host of travellers had brought to light, and published to the world, detailed accounts of the manners, customs, and religious opinions, even of the most remote and barbarous nations.

The Apostles then, to have done all that the history of the early Church declares them to have accomplished, must not only have been able to work such miracles as healing the sick, and the like, as a proof of their being messengers of God, but must have been able also to exercise other powers equally superhuman. They must have been masters of a depth of information, not alone impossible, considering their former lives and occupations, but incredible under any circumstances. They must have been linguists, grammarians, critics, profound scholars in the theology of their own country, and perfectly acquainted with the superstitions of

LECTURE other lands. The longest life, passed amidst the severest
 XXVI. studies and under the guidance of the most able teachers, would have been insufficient for the acquisition of the tenth part of that knowledge, which burst upon these unlettered men upon the day of Pentecost; and which empowered them to execute their Master's commission to the full: to preach the glad tidings of salvation, without any further teaching, to countries, of the very existence of which they had, doubtless, been previously ignorant ¹.

These, then, were the miraculous powers by which the Church of Christ was established: powers which, we know, have been for many years withdrawn from the ministers of the Gospel; although we cannot assign any exact date to their cessation ².

It has been sometimes argued, that the Christian Church, once firmly founded by this direct interposition of God, required no continued exercise of miracles to sustain it, and

¹ Dorotheus, in his sketch of the martyrdoms of the prophets, apostles, and seventy disciples, assigns to each of the twelve his respective field of labour.

He tells us that—

Peter	preached in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, Rome.
Andrew	_____ { Scythia and Ethiopia, to the Sogdians and Bactrians.
James, son of Zebedee	_____ to the twelve dispersed tribes.
John	_____ Asia.
Philip	_____ Phrygia.
Bartholomew	_____ India.
Thomas	_____ { to the Parthians, Medes, Persians, Caramanians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, and Magi.
Matthew	_____ Parthia (according to other accounts, Ethiopia).
Simon Zelotes	_____ Mauritania, and part of Africa.
Jude	_____ { to the Edessenes, and throughout all Mesopotamia.
James, son of Alpheus	_____ No account given.
Matthias	_____ Part of Ethiopia.

² When we bear in mind that the Apostles conferred spiritual gifts, including the working of miracles, upon several members of the infant Church (some of whom were probably young men at the time), there must have been many instances of the exercise of these powers, at least in the early part of the second century, if not later. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, was alive in the middle of that century; and, after his time, there are few well-attested instances of the exercise of miraculous powers, although we cannot safely say, that (rare as they unquestionably were) they entirely disappeared even in the third century. Burton's Lectures on Eccl. Hist. xiii. p. 4-8; and xxii. p. 230-232. And on the reported miracles of Gregory Thaumaturgus, see Lect. xxv. p. 310.

that therefore they have ceased. But “a better reason,” LECTURE XXVI. remarks Bishop Heber, “for the rarity of miracles, may, perhaps, be found, in the consideration that, if they were common, they would be miracles no longer. Those visible pledges of God’s interference, which are calculated, in an especial manner, to arouse the attention of mankind, would, if often repeated, excite no more attention than the dawn and sunset, or the receding and returning tide. They are restricted, therefore, by Almighty Wisdom, to those solemn occurrences, which are to be ever memorable among men: and not only may it be said, that such displays of power are wonderful because they are rare, but that they are therefore rare, in order that they may be wonderful. And, instead of urging that miracles have ceased, because they are no longer needed, it may be said, perhaps with more conformity to truth, and certainly with as much humility, that God, in these latter days, has left us to ourselves, that we may feel more perfectly our own weakness, and our want of His assistance.”

Heber’s
Bampt.
Lect. v.
p. 262.

But, though these miraculous interpositions have ceased, though signs and wonders no longer attest the visible guardianship that God exercises over His Church, we are not left “comfortless.” To us the promise of the Apostle Peter extends: we are of that class, whom he designated by the title, of those that were “afar off:” even one amongst those Gentile nations, to which the prophet Isaiah saw of old that peace would be proclaimed. We are of that wild stock that Is. lvii. 19. was grafted in on Israel’s olive root, not for our deserts, but through God’s mercy and election; nationally picked out from the people of the earth, to be the depositories of His will and word, though, it may be, not individually selected to be the vessels of His grace. And therefore “till the return of Christ to earth, and so long as we, no less than the Apostles, are mourners for His absence, and for that unequal state of worldly things, which His last great advent is to remedy, we are entitled, equally with the Apostles, to look up with pious confidence, for the same comfort, which, for the same reason, was promised to us, as to them.”

Heber, ut
supra,
p. 264.

It remains then, first, to notice the manner in which the Spirit generally manifests His presence in these latter days,

LECTURE and the channels through which the Christian disciple may
 XXVI. reasonably expect His grace to be imparted; and, secondly,
 to endeavour to ascertain, what individual interest we have in
 the fulfilment of the Apostle's promise.

Heber,
 ut supra,
 p. 266.

"The presence of the Comforter," says Bishop Heber, is to be looked for, in these days, "in the sacraments of the Eucharist and of Baptism; in the succession of a ministry Apostolically ordained and governed; and, above all, in those secret aids and blessed influences, which, from the greater frequency of their occurrence, and not from any supposed or real inferiority in their value, are distinguished from the gifts of supernatural power and knowledge, as the ordinary graces of the Holy Ghost."

Rom. viii.
 26.

These, we may safely say, are the principal channels, through which the Spirit's grace is now conveyed: and, as the Apostle Peter tells us of the fact, of the Spirit's abiding presence, so we are instructed by his brother Paul, as to the manner in which the Spirit acts. He speaks of Him, as an assisting Spirit. "The Spirit," he says, "helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." Throughout the whole course of the operations of the Holy Ghost, from the day of Pentecost to the present hour, has this character of the Helper to man's infirmities been sustained. It has been manifested equally, in the support given to the Apostles throughout their toils and persecutions; in the fostering protection afforded to the Church of Christ during ages of superstition, and almost Idolatry³; in the preservation of the integrity of God's written word; and (which is an individual and personal concern) in those preparations of the heart, which, unless resisted by the perverse temper of man, will end assuredly in the sanctification of his soul. The office, then, of the Comforter is in no wise altered, though the manner be changed, in which He displays its exercise. Of old, He advocated the interests of the Church by a series of

³ "Unless the Holy Ghost had been always present, governing and preserving the Church from the beginning, it could never have sustained so many and great brunts of affliction and persecution, with so little damage and harm as it hath." Second part of the Homily for Whit-Sunday.

mighty signs, and gifts, and wonders. It is by the still small voice, by the gentle persuasion, by the warnings of the conscience, that He ordinarily acts in these latter days. LECTURE
XXVI.

“The Spirit helpeth our infirmities:” but we must feel those infirmities; must feel our need of His help, and feel, that none but God’s own blessed Spirit can effectually aid us in our great strait, before we can reasonably expect deliverance from perils present, or from wrath in prospect⁴. The first step, then, towards personally availing ourselves of St. Peter’s promise, is to be conscious, that our hearts are “desperately wicked,” and “evil from our youth;” that they are “very far gone from original righteousness” (as far, that is, as is consistent with our capability of renewal); that they are alienated from God; that they not only have no natural bias to turn to Him, to love Him, to serve Him, and to obey Him, but that our dispositions lie entirely in another direction,—that they urge us to love ourselves, to serve our own worldly interests, to obey our own lusts and passions.

Jer. xvii. 9.
Gen. viii. 21.
Art. ix.
Quam longissimè.

Lect.ii.p.14.

Since, then, “this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated,” and since our hearts, even the very best of them, produce spontaneously that “lust” which, “when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin,” we may safely say, that unless there is some method, by which we may not only obtain pardon for the past, but acquire another, and that a right bias for the future, we must be banished for ever from the presence of Him, who has pledged Himself to admit no impurity to His sight.

Art. ix.

James i. 15.

How, then, is this to be effected? It is at this point that so many differ in their opinion. Some will say, “Repent, do better for the future; and then, for Christ’s sake, ye shall be safe.” It is a false and too hasty assumption. In this manner, the heart is left in the same state in which repentance found it: it receives no new power to withstand temptation; the source of sin, the evil bias, however it may have been corrected by baptismal grace, is certainly not removed by repentance. We may sin, and repent at intervals

⁴ “It is the Holy Ghost, and no other thing, that doth quicken the minds of men, stirring up good and godly motions in their hearts, which are agreeable to the will and commandment of God, such as otherwise of their own crooked and perverse nature they should never have.” Homily on Whit-Sunday, part i.

LECTURE for ever, and yet be no nearer having a holy heart than at
 XXVI. first. And even "the act of faith, by which a believer applies
 to himself the benefits or privileges, purchased for him by the
 death of Christ, does not, *of itself*, purify the soul, nor do
 away the taint of sin."

Bp. Blom-
 field's
 Sermon. iv.
 p. 62.

Others will ask, "What! have I not been regenerated in baptism? am I not therefore in covenant with God, and so, safe beneath the shadow of His Almighty wings?" Nay, though baptism takes us out of the great family of the world, and incorporates us into the elect household of God; though by that we are born again into new hopes, invested with high spiritual capacities, endowed with great present privileges, and with greater yet in prospect; we are not therefore, as a matter of course, so entirely changed by the sacrament, as to render unnecessary that after-work of the Spirit, by which the child of God is rooted and grounded in the faith of His Redeemer. This would be to confound regeneration with conversion. It is true, that at Baptism we receive the first dawnings of the Spirit; but, alas! the number of those, who sin away their baptismal grace, proves to us, beyond a question, that the Spirit is, ordinarily, an assisting only, not a compelling Spirit: His grace, as then given, is that spark of divine life, which we may either so improve, as to fan it into an abiding flame of godliness, or suffer to die away, utterly quenched by the host of overmastering and unresisted passions.

Lect. i. p. 5.

Lect. ix.
 p. 90.

Our spiritual faculties follow the same analogy as our mental and corporeal capacities. Exercise them, and they become gradually and increasingly strong: neglect them, and they will become weak and torpid; and finally, to all practical purposes, extinct, or nearly so. It is thus also with the productions of the earth. Suffer the fairest garden flower to lie, from year to year, unheeded and untended; it will degenerate in all cases,—in some, relapse into its original wildness. The seed must be cared for, its value must be understood, the ground must be well prepared, well watered, from time to time renewed, at all seasons carefully heeded; else, the produce will become more and more worthless, until, at last, it may cease altogether to spring up.

It is even so with the grace of the Holy Ghost, imparted

to the soul at baptism. We are not to neglect "the gift that is in us," but to become "workers together with Him" who gave it, that we "receive not the grace of God in vain." We may just as well expect, to find the reasoning powers fully developed, without any kind of education whatever; the body to perform its functions in the highest degree, unexercised; the earth to produce her choicest fruits, when all uncared for; as to look for the regenerate man to continue sanctified, unless the seed of the Spirit be so fostered and nourished by the grateful devotion of the soul in which it is implanted, that God, in His infinite mercy, may vouchsafe to give the increase.

And will God do so? will He invariably bless our humble endeavours to be one with Him, with the Saviour, and the Spirit? Or, are there any so shut out from this gift, as to be, in the ordinary sense of the word, unable to attain to it? These are awful questions, which we will attempt to answer in the next Lecture.

LECTURE
XXVI.
1 Tim. iv.
14.
2 Cor. vi. 1.

LECTURE XXVII.

Acts ii. 39.

“The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

LECTURE XXVII.

Luke xi. 13.
John xvi.
24.
James i.
5—7.
See Lect. ix.
p. 86.

THE forbearance of God is the leading theme of the old, as His positive love is the pervading principle of the new covenant. And even were there no explicit promises on His part, that He would give His grace and spiritual wisdom to *all* who ask in honesty and faith, we must expunge no small portion of His word, before we can, consistently with its whole tenor, believe, that He has arbitrarily excluded any one from availing himself of that forbearance, or from participating in the effects of that love; any one, that is, who is sincerely and perseveringly anxious to receive the benefits of either.

The attentive student, who is anxious to draw sound general truths from the inspired volume, can scarcely fail to perceive, that God, in all His dispensations, has addressed man as a reasonable thinking creature, invested with a certain degree of free will¹; we will not dispute about its exact measure. We find in consequence, as we might have expected, a series of invitations, warnings, expostulations, promises, and threats; conditions expressly attached to each,—being the advantage of obedience fairly contrasted with the penalty of disobedience. Man is appealed to, as though he were free to choose,—empowered to take his stand,—to select his part,

¹ “God,” says St. Chrysostom, “made man independent, so as to be able to choose virtue, and to avoid vice.” Hom. v. in Rom. c. ii. 16. s. 5. And again he remarks, “It is a reproach to the very blessings themselves of God, if their nature be not such, as that men should run to them of their own accord, and count it a great favour.” Hom. ii. in 1 Cor. 1. 9. s. 9. See also August. Confess. b. vii. s. 5, and the note in the Oxford translation.

—God, or the world. And, we may safely say, that invitation LECTURE XXVII. would cease to be invitation, were the power of accepting or rejecting denied us: threat would be no threat, unless we were able to take warning by it, and so to flee from the wrath to come.

When God placed Adam in the garden of Eden, forbade him to eat of the fruit of the tree of good and evil, and added, Gen. ii. 17. See Lect. iii. p. 26, 27. “in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,”

—the appeal was made to his common sense,—to his free will,—to his power to obey or disobey. Created in the image of His Maker, there was no bias, only the liability to sin: and, certainly, there could have been no over-ruling necessity which compelled him to disobey, or that prevented him from availing himself of the caution given to him by God.

So too, when the preacher of righteousness was commissioned, for the space of one hundred and twenty years, to warn the antediluvian world of the coming desolation, are we to understand, that Noah, during that long period, preached to those whose hearts were sealed to the message, and shut up against its acceptance, by God’s foredetermined counsel? Nay, it would have been a sore mockery of mercy, had the holy man been commanded to offer the ark of refuge to those, who were kept back from entering in by an unseen, yet irresistible power. It were safer far to conclude, that God’s Spirit strove with man, until, grieved, vexed, and quenched,—the point came, at which He would strive no longer, but left those who had rejected Him to the guidance of that evil spirit, whom they had chosen instead to follow. The declaration, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man,” is perfectly irreconcilable with the idea of the arbitrary visitations of that Spirit, who can scarcely be, at the same moment, striving and over-ruling.

See Lect. xxiv. p. 280. Gen. vi. 3.

But still more clearly, in God’s dealings with the Jews, can we trace the Holy Ghost, acting, not upon the system of irreversible decrees in existence before the foundation of the world, and developed in the fulness of God’s time,—but as an assisting, warning, and pleading Spirit. When Moses received the commands of God, to lay His covenant before His people, the prophet lawgiver plainly told them of the blessings that would come upon them, if they hearkened unto the voice of the Lord their God; and the curses that would

LECTURE
XXVII.Deut. xxx.
19.

ensue, if they stubbornly refused to listen. The record of both was before them: that they were at liberty to make their choice, is evident from the remarkable words that Moses added,—“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore *choose* life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” These words not only imply but distinctly express, that both threat and promise, cursing and blessing, were conditional,—dependent upon the acceptance or rejection of the covenant on the part of the Jews,—upon their faith or disbelief in God’s word. And, though we now read the dying lawgiver’s denunciations as prophecy lost in the reality of history, it does not follow, that, at the time of their delivery, God had irrevocably decreed that they should come to pass, or that He had resolved upon their fulfilment, in preference to the promised blessings. Both were shut up in the womb of time: of each we may conceive Him to have said, “I will see what their end shall be.”

Deut. xxxii.
20.

Look, again, to the numberless passages of Holy Writ, in which God is represented as expostulating and pleading with His people,—as even reasoning with them, and challenging examination into the justice of His dealings with them. At one time, His remonstrance are those of a tender father expostulating with His children, and complaining, that their unnatural rebellion will not suffer Him to shew them the fulness of His affection. “Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, . . . whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for *why will ye die*, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore *turn yourselves*, and live ye.” At another, after having most touchingly described His tender care of Israel,—how He had borne with their sins and follies with all the gentleness of a nursing mother,—after having testified of His people, that they were “bent to backsliding” from Him, “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?” asks the Lord; “how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.” How affectionate is this expostulation, how pathetic this complaint! The strivings of that God, whose

Isa. i. 18.
Ezek. xviii.
25—30.

Ib. 30—32.

Hosea xi.
7, 8.

name is "Love," alone are evident ; and no traces of a Deity, who, as He must have foreknown, so, according to the doctrine of irreversible decrees, had foredoomed their disobedience. For, had their backslidings been a matter not alone foreseen by God's omniscience, but foredetermined by His omnipotence, we should then have to believe the inconsistency, nay, something more, the impossibility of God deploring His own decrees, instead of man's transgressions : of God expostulating with His people for disobeying commands, which they were morally and physically incapable of executing ; and for flying in the face of precepts, which, when given, it was settled they should disregard.

As clearly do we find the universality of the offer of Redemption, and of the Spirit's help to enable us to work out our own salvation, laid down in the New Testament. "Come unto me, *all* ye that labour, and are heavy laden," is our Saviour's merciful invitation : and the terms in which it is expressed imply no reserve, no exclusion ; the message is given, not to a select few, but indiscriminately, and generally, to *all* ; the sense of sin, the consciousness of its burden, is the only stipulation. "And I will give you rest," is the promise that accompanies this invitation : the positiveness and explicitness of the promise, connected with the summons as intimately as cause with effect, forbidding us to suppose, that there is any secret counsel in the back-ground, withholding some from accepting the invitation upon the terms proposed. Again, the words in which our Saviour speaks of the sacrifices that His followers must make, in consequence of their Christian profession, seem most distinctly to indicate, that the burthen of the Cross is a voluntary burthen,—and its assumption not dependent upon the arbitrary visitation of irresistible grace. "If any man *will* come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me : for, whosoever *will* save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it." The voluntariness of the action is more evident from the peculiarity of the original Greek, than it can well be from any translation.

Matt. xi. 28.

ἐγὼ τὸς θέλω.

ὅς γὰρ αὖ
θέλω.Matt. xvi.
24, 25.

Our merciful Lord seems to have been singularly careful, to set at rest any misgivings that might naturally arise in the minds of those, whose consciousness of sinfulness would make

LECTURE XXVII. them doubt, whether God would vouchsafe to receive them, upon their coming to Him in repentance and in faith. Not only has He given us three parables in succession, to set forth His willingness "to seek and to save that which was lost;" but He has met the question itself in terms too explicit, one would think, to be misunderstood,—“Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out².” An expression nearly similar occurs in the Revelation: “Let him that is athirst come; and *whosoever will*, let him take the water of life *freely*.” Nor do these passages stand alone. When St. Paul declares that, “as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, unto justification of life,” the necessary deduction from the Apostle’s words is, that, as none are excluded from the imputation of sin, so none are excluded from the capability of availing themselves of the remedy. If the curse extends to all, the offer of salvation, through Him who died to put away that curse, extends to all; else the free gift has *not* come upon *all* men.

To the same effect is that remarkable passage in the first Epistle to Timothy, in which God our Saviour is represented, not as One, who, according to the supralapsarian scheme, has decreed from all eternity the damnation of some of His creatures; nor as one, who, as the sublapsarians tell us, passes over the non-elect as unworthy of His regard; but as a God, “who *will* have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth:” not as a God, who decreed His Son to die for the few, who should be saved through His arbitrary election; but as one “who gave Himself a ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time.” A similar,—perhaps, with reference to the original language, a still stronger testimony to the fullness of God’s mercy in Christ, is given by St. Peter: “The Lord,” says the Apostle, “is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing,” not exercising His will, that is,—not decreeing, “that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

One more passage remains to be adduced: “If any man sin,” says St. John, “we have an advocate with the Father,

² The whole verse runs thus: *πάν ὃ δίδωσί μοι ὁ πατήρ, πρὸς ἐμὲ ἤξει*, thus speaking generally; but individually, as if to exclude none, when He goes on to say, *καὶ τὸν ἐρχόμενον πρὸς με οὐ μὴ ἐκβάλω ἔξω*.

Luke xv.
See also
Matt. xviii.
11.
Luke xix.
10.

John vi. 37.

ὁ θεὸς
δωρεάν,
as a free gift.
Rev. xxii.
17.

Rom. v. 18.

See Burnet
and Tomline
on Art. xvii.

ὅς πάντας
ἀνθρώπους
θέλει σωθῆ-
ναι.
1 Tim. ii.
4. 6.

μὴ βουλό-
μενος τινὰς
ἀπολέσθαι.
2 Pet. iii. 9.
See Lect. ix.
p. 85.

Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." But it is not a matter of controversy, whether there is any man who does not sin; "*all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:" therefore, according to the declaration of the Apostle, "*all*" have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous; *all* are privileged to look to Him, as the propitiation for their sins. But to this Calvin says, No. By declaring that the tenor of Scripture warrants us in concluding, that God, by His immutable counsel, has determined, whom He should hereafter call unto salvation, and whom He should devote to damnation³, he asserts that there are those, for whom there is *no* propitiation. Even if we paused at this point, and hesitated for an instant whom we should follow, the inspired Apostle John, or the French Reformer Calvin, the former, in the succeeding sentence, decides the matter: and, as if by a prophetic foreknowledge that, in after-times, the Scriptures would be so wrested, as to be made to favour the doctrine of particular redemption,—as if he feared that the expression, "for our sins," might seem to imply, that the propitiation spoken of extended to the elect of that day alone, he is careful immediately to add, "and not for our's only, but for the sins of the whole world."

Clearly, then, as these several declarations will prove the universality of God's love towards His children, some satisfactory elucidation must be given of those passages of Scripture, which would lead us to a conclusion diametrically opposite, and would bid us look upon God with the eyes of the founder of the Genevan school.

If our attention is to be so confined to these passages, as from them alone to derive our knowledge of God's dealings with us,—and if they are to be taken by themselves, without their context, without any consideration of the persons to

³ That Calvin may not be made to say more than he really has said, his own words are here quoted.

"Prædestinationem vocamus æternum Dei decretum, quo apud se constitutum habuit, quid de *unoquoque* homine fieri vellet. Non enim pariconditiōe creantur omnes: sed aliis vita æterna, aliis damnatio æterna præordinatur." Calvin. Inst. l. iii. c. 21. s. 5. "Quod ergo Scriptura clarè ostendit, dicimus, æterno et immutabili consilio Deum semel constituisse, quos olim semel assumere vellet in salutem, quos rursus exitio devovere." Ib. s. 7.

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whom they were addressed; and, where they are quotations from the Old Testament, without any reference to the sense in which they were originally used: then words must be allowed to have their legitimate meaning, and at the conclusion but now alluded to we must, of necessity, arrive. But if, on the other hand,—without straining these texts to any unnatural interpretation, without warping the manifest intention of Scripture, in order to suit a particular system of theology,—it can be made to appear, that they may be so explained, as to agree with the views already laid down; and if, besides, such a mode of explanation be even needful, to make Scripture consistent with itself; then we may safely say, that the doctrine of Calvin is not the doctrine of the Bible,—that God rejects none, but those who have previously rejected Him; withholds His grace from none, save from such as have done despite unto the Spirit of grace.

That God's election of nations, to be the depositories of His revealed will and word, is perfectly arbitrary,—dependent upon His pleasure only, founded upon principles utterly unknown to us,—is not only perfectly consonant with our ideas of the Supreme Being, but seems inseparably connected with the infinity of His essence. There are counsels in the bosom of the Most High, which have been mysteries even to the Angels who surround His everlasting throne:—and these are doubtless of them. That individuals, again, may be selected by the inscrutable wisdom of God, either to be the founders of nations, or to be the secondary means of executing His designs, is also perfectly reconcileable with His necessary attributes: and the choice must be determined according to His own good will and pleasure.

Thus, the Jews were selected to be God's people, in preference to any of the surrounding nations. Thus, in after-times, the Gentiles were admitted to a participation in the blessings of the Gospel covenant;—and, thus, we too are a Christian people, instead of falling down before the Wodens and Frigas of our Saxon forefathers:—and, thus it has pleased God, in the exercise of His sovereign pleasure, to take away the lamp of the Gospel from some, who heretofore have enjoyed it; and to bestow it upon others, who, as far as we can judge from their actions, seem to have but little apprecia-

tion of the real value of the blessing. It has appeared good to Him, to withdraw the knowledge of "the truth, as it is in Jesus," from the Churches of Alexandria, Carthage, Smyrna, Ephesus, Thessalonica, and others; Churches, where a Mark, a Cyprian, a Polycarp, and even a Paul had taught:—and He has been pleased to ordain, that, although eighteen centuries have passed since the first preaching of the Gospel, they have found, at this hour, no more than a third part of the world obedient to its message. Election this is,—beyond all dispute, election,—but to what? not to certain salvation, but to the capability of availing themselves of the means to so great an end. All nations, where the Gospel is preached as "a witness," are "the called" according to God's everlasting purpose,—the "elect according to His foreknowledge;" but it does not therefore follow, of necessity, that each individual amongst them should succeed in making "his calling and election sure:" "many are called, but few are chosen." Nor does it follow, that all nations, to whom God has thought fit to deny a knowledge of the Gospel, are therefore born to damnation. The Almighty, we are told in many passages of Scripture, will hereafter judge all men according to their works; and, in the account of this judgment, there is no mention made of their election, or non-election, to a knowledge of His will.

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See Rom.
viii. 28.
1 Pet. i. 2.

2 Pet. i. 10.
Matt. xxii.
14.

Rev. xiv. 13.
xx. 12.
2 Cor. xi.
15.

Thus, too, with regard to individuals: Abraham was chosen before Lot, as the founder of the Jewish people;—Isaac was preferred to Ishmael, Jacob to Esau, Judah to his brethren, David to the rest of his family.

But, though this choice of individuals, for the furtherance of the especial designs of the Most High, was made, as far as we can see, arbitrarily, "that the purpose of God according to election might stand;"—though these individuals were "vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory;"—where is there any mention, that they, who were not so chosen, were necessarily "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" Where find we any account of individuals visibly and avowedly consigned to perdition, except those, who, as Pharaoh and Judas, had drawn down that perdition on their own souls by their own wilful obduracy? Where read we, that even nations were rejected, after having received the light of

Rom. ix. 11.
Ib. 23.

Ib. 22.

LECTURE XXVII. Christianity, except they had themselves beforehand re-
jected God, and by national apostacy provoked national visitation?

But, as the eighth and ninth chapters to the Romans are frequently supposed to contradict this interpretation of God's dealings with His creatures, and to sanction the doctrine of particular redemption, it may be well briefly to endeavour to ascertain, what, in all probability, was the real object that the Apostle had in view when writing them.

The Epistle was written by a Jew, fully versed in the prejudices and opinions of his countrymen, to Jews, deeply impressed with both,—and, at the period of their receiving this letter, beginning at last to see that their peculiar privileges were fast departing from them. No feeling was stronger in the mind of the Jew, than the remembrance that he was one of the people of Israel,—God's elect; and therefore separated from, and distinguished above all other nations of the earth. No prejudice was more deeply rooted, than that the privileges, which accompanied that election, were exclusively and permanently attached to his own nation;—and to have hinted, that the alien Gentile was before-ordained of God, eventually to be placed upon the same footing with the Hebrew of Hebrews, as far as these privileges were concerned, would have been a most unusual and distasteful doctrine to Jewish ears⁴. To go beyond this,—to tell them, that they should ultimately fall from their high estate, and that, through their fall, salvation should come unto the Gentiles, would require the utmost caution, as well as ten-

⁴ Our blessed Saviour's efforts were incessantly directed against this prejudice. Gentle, and guarded as they were, they drew down upon Him the indignation of every sect amongst the Jews,—united, at least, on this one point. It required a special vision from heaven, to reconcile St. Peter to the admission of the Gentiles into the covenant of grace, and to convince him, that "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." Acts x. 34, 35. And when St. Paul, in the self-same year in which he wrote this Epistle to the Romans (A.D. 60), openly declared, at Jerusalem, his divine mission to the Gentiles,—"they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live." Acts xxii. 21, 22.

derness, on the part of the speaker. How, then, could he prove to them, that they were first nationally elected, then nationally rejected, to make way for those to whom God had foredetermined to shew similar mercies? By a reference to the Old Testament alone: by shewing, that so it was prophesied; and that those prophecies were given, in God's eternal foreknowledge of all that should come to pass hereafter.

In conformity with this design, the Apostle proves "that national mercies and privileges are at God's free disposal, and arbitrary limitation. It was so," he argues, "in the case of Abraham's covenant, and the promise made to him;—in the instances of Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau." He contends further, that "the sins and ingratitude of any Church or people may be pardoned or punished more or less, sooner or later, as Divine wisdom and justice shall see fit; as in the instances of Moses and the Israelites,—and of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. He then reproves the infidel Jews for a stubborn objection against the Divine punishments. And he shews their rejection for refusing the Gospel Religion, and the reception of the Gentiles into the Christian covenant in their stead, to be agreeable to divine truth, justice, and wisdom, and to the Scriptures of the Old Testament." He quotes, from the book of Exodus, the assurance which God gave to Moses, that His grace should surely be with the nation, that He had separated "from all the people on the face of the earth."

Pyle's
Paraph.
in loc.

"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." And if they should feel inclined to "reply against God," and to cavil at His justice, in extending this mercy to others in like manner as He had done to them, the Apostle calls to their remembrance the declaration made by Him to them of old, through the lips of Jeremiah;—"Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."

Compare
Rom. ix. 15.
with Exod.
xxxiii. 19.

It was a quotation doubtless familiar to those to whom the Apostle wrote: its application was irresistible, and the succeeding verses vindicate God's sovereign right in building up, and in plucking down,—in planting and in destroying,—not individuals, for there is no mention made of them, but nations and kingdoms. "If," then, "St. Paul had borne the predestination of *individuals* in view, throughout the argument

Jer. xviii. 6.

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Sumner's
Apostol.
Preaching,
c. ii. p. l. 49.
See also
Chrys.
Hom. xvi.
in Rom.

under consideration, he would not have proved it, by recurring to passages familiarly known to the Jews he was addressing, and indisputably and solely applying to the conduct of God with respect to *nations*. If however, on the other hand, he had really in view the rejection of the Jews from that exclusive favour on which they laid so much stress, it was not only strictly natural, but the most convincing argument he could employ, to select such passages, as that from Exodus, declaring the original source of their privileges to be founded in the mercy of God alone; and that from Jeremiah, exemplifying the punishment He inflicts upon nations which do not perform His will."

But still, it must not be kept out of sight, that there are recorded in the Bible cases of individuals, manifestly given over to reprobation; not merely left alone by God, but overruled, apparently, to become the doomed instruments of working out His will and pleasure; unconscious or unwilling means of accomplishing His prophecies, or of fulfilling His fore-ordained designs. It remains to see, how these cases are reconcileable with man's free will, and with God's free offers of mercy to all mankind.

The selection of two of the most striking instances will, perhaps, be as sufficient to enable us to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, as if we were separately to investigate every individual case. When we read that Pharaoh's heart was hardened by God, we may possibly, at first sight, look on him as on one, who was destined to run a desperate course of ungodliness, and was therefore comparatively innocent of wrong, as what he did was done "ignorantly, and in unbelief." The conclusion would be too hasty. Pharaoh was distinctly warned of what was to come to pass, before each visitation. He had every opportunity given him of repentance, of grace, and of improvement:—else, all the warnings that he received were so many mockeries. He resisted all these warnings,—he shut his eyes against the manifestations of superior power,—he would not see that the God of the Hebrews fought for Israel. He lived in a land of imposture,—and, as long as the magicians, with their enchantments, did as Moses did, so long was the miserable man buoyed up by the hope, that it was only a trial of strength between the God of Israel and the

gods of Egypt. The point came, at which the power of the magicians stopped,—when they were compelled to acknowledge the workings of the finger of God. It was here that Pharaoh might have repented,—might, though at the eleventh hour, have gat him right humbly to the Lord. But no: he was stout-hearted in his guilt; he hardened himself in sin; and then, but not till then, God, we are told, hardened the heart of Pharaoh. In other words, His Spirit no longer strove with him: He withdrew His pleading grace, because His warnings were resisted: the wretched monarch was delivered over to Satan, whose service he had preferred, and to whose counsel he had listened. “Pharaoh,” says St. Chrysostom, “was a vessel of wrath, that is, a man, who by his own hardheartedness had kindled the wrath of God. For, after enjoying much long-suffering, he became no better, but remained unimproved.” And so, God made use of this obdurate prince, to compel him to work out His will. The day of mercy and of repentance was past: that of hardening came: and we can well conceive God saying of him, “For this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee; and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth.”

LECTURE
XXVII.Exod. viii.
15—32.
ix. 12.Chrys.
Hom. xvi.
in Rom.
ch. ix. 22.
s. 8.Exod. ix.
16.
Rom. ix. 17.

The same general remarks will apply to Balaam, to Saul, to the arch-apostate Judas. With all God strove for a while; but all preferred to follow after their own devices: and to them might be addressed, individually, the awful words that God spake, generally, to His rebellious people; “because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee.” With regard to Judas, the case is peculiarly clear. He had received, and doubtless exercised, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, together with his Apostolic brethren, when Jesus sent them upon their first missionary labours: it is impossible therefore to suppose, but that he had experienced, in an especial degree, the strivings and remonstrances of the Spirit. His covetousness and selfishness prevailed above all; and, when his own evil passions decided for him, and marked out the course that he was resolved to follow,—are we to impugn God’s justice, or to quarrel with His mercy, if, at this point, His invisible arm arrested the unhappy sinner in his career

Hos. iv. 6.

LECTURE of guilt, and made the crime of one the unconscious means
 XXVII. of furthering that design, which was destined to include all
 within its comprehensive influence? It was thus that, Jesus
 was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge
 of God."

Acts ii. 23.

Forster's
 Apostol.
 Auth. of the
 Hebrews,
 s. xi. p. 429.

Beyond all question, there are difficulties connected with this, as with every human view of God's divine arrangements. How can it be otherwise? "The kingdoms of Providence and of Grace are so nearly allied, that it is not for short-sighted man to draw the line between them: to pronounce where God's providential election ends, or His election of grace begins; or to fathom the depths of spiritual mercy and blessing, not to communities only, but to individuals, with which God's least extraordinary providential dealings may be fraught." The difficulties inseparable from these mysterious subjects are of such a character, that we can scarcely expect to master them, until faculties exclusively spiritual shall be permitted to grapple with the hard things of God. Who shall attempt to define, how God's foredetermination is separable from His foreknowledge? or, how either is, strictly speaking, consistent with our free agency? "A cockle fish," says Bishop Beveridge, "may as soon crowd the ocean into its narrow shell, as vain man ever comprehend the decrees of God." We reason from our own contracted extent of knowledge, we draw our arguments from our own limited measure of understanding, when we would essay to reduce the hidden counsels of the Everlasting to a regular system of human argument and demonstration. All that we can do, is to render Scripture consistent with itself; and so to interpret it, as not to make isolated passages contradict the general tenor of its revelations.

Beveridge
 on Art. xvii.

The expediency of discussing these matters has been often called in question. Even were it becoming in the Christian minister, to admit into his vocabulary such a word as "expediency," in its modern sense,—it is hardly possible to avoid meeting the subject fairly, when we have before us the warning of our Church, as to the twofold danger of taking up an imperfect or hasty view, of the important doctrines of predestination and election. Undue elevation, on the one

See Art.
 xvii.

hand, and, on the other, unwarrantable despair, are too serious matters to be trifled with or let alone. LECTURE
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But we must enter upon these awful investigations, with the remembrance that we are treading upon holy ground;—and that, as Moses was bidden to take his shoes from off his feet, whilst they trode on ground hallowed by the Almighty's presence, even so we must come before Him with a like humility,—with prayer,—with faith,—and, above all, with charity. Exod. iii. 5.

LECTURE XXVIII.

MATT. xviii. 14.

“It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.”

LECTURE XXVIII. BOTH the letter and the spirit of the seventeenth article of our Church would lead us to conclude, that, “as a due consideration of the Divine decree to save all who shall believe and obey the Gospel, is a source of inexpressible consolation to virtuous and godly persons; encourages them to rely upon the promised assistance of the Holy Spirit; fortifies them against the temptations to fleshly lusts; teaches them to set their affections on things above; strengthens their faith; and animates their love towards God: so the unwarranted idea of God’s absolute and unconditional predestination is apt to drive the presumptuous and the wicked, who resist the influence of the Spirit of Christ, either into a state of gloomy despondency on the one hand, or into a course of unbridled licentiousness on the other.” This twofold point remains, then, to be considered.

Tomline’s
Theology,
vol. ii.
p. 311.

First, there is the danger of undue elevation; for, if I can bring myself to believe, that I am elected to salvation from all eternity, I am privileged to believe as well, that nothing can interfere with that election. Why need I, then, take any pains to make my “calling and election sure?” I might argue that any exertions on my part would interfere with God’s arrangements; would intrude upon His privileges; would be, practically, taking into my own hands that, which He has vindicated to Himself as His exclusive work. Why need I exercise self-denial?—why need I control my wishes, curb my passions, or discipline my temper? No act of mine can either mar or further God’s work, if it be true that, from all eternity, that work has been

2 Pet. i. 10.

decided on: it would be the potsherd of the earth striving with his Maker. Why need I study God's word, when that word can tell me no more than I already know? why need I wait upon His ordinances, since they can neither contribute to that sanctification which has been perfected; nor tend to that salvation which has been completed? nay, more, why need I pray? since prayer, in its proper sense, is offered up, either for the purpose of deprecating God's wrath, or of imploring His blessing; of entreating pardon for the past, or of petitioning for more of His grace in time to come. His wrath I have no cause to fear; His pardon is already secured to me; of His blessings and His favour I am, from eternity, the privileged possessor.

LECTURE
XXVIII.

There is but one motive, then, and not even that a necessary motive, which can induce me, throughout the whole of my life, to serve God, in heart, and soul, and strength; and that is gratitude. But he can know very little of human nature, who can persuade himself, that permanent thankfulness, even for the highest favours past, is, commonly, likely to proceed from the selfish spirit of man, unless there be some undercurrent of belief that greater mercies are in store, which gratitude and obedience can alone secure.

Again, if the position of Calvin be correct, how am I to explain those many passages of Scripture, which either expressly command me to work out my "salvation with fear and trembling¹;" or else imply, that, in part at least, that salvation is dependent upon my conduct, upon my abiding in grace, upon my continuance in well-doing?

Phil. ii. 12.
Rom. ii. 6—
11.
Gal. vi. 7, 8.
Matt. x. 22.
John xv.
4—6.
1 John ii.
17.

And further, if, before the foundation of the world, it has been ordained that I, through election, should become the recipient of God's grace, then that grace, so given, can scarcely be otherwise than indefectible; and I cannot sin it away, cannot fall from it, cannot, in short, become a castaway. What then? am I to forget, that the Apostle Paul, if he did not express this very *fear* with regard to himself, at least

¹ "In whatever manner," says Bp. Bull, "you interpret these words of the Apostle, they totally overturn the irresistible operation of grace; for unto what purpose would be this grave exhortation of the Apostle's, that we should *work out our own salvation*, if we could *not work*?" Harm. Apost. Diss. ii. c. 18. s. 14.

LECTURE implied that such a thing was *possible*? am I to forget, XXVIII.
 1 Cor. ix. 27. that both he and the Apostle Peter say decidedly, that we *can* fall from grace³; the one, speaking of the extreme difficulty, almost amounting to an impossibility, of renewing such unto repentance; the other declaring in so many words, that "it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them?"

Heb. vi.
 4—6.
 See Lect. ix.
 p. 90, 91.

2 Pet. ii. 21.

But it may be argued, that this is supposing an extreme, nay, an almost impossible case; that it is incredible that any one should so far forget or pervert the general tenor of Scripture, as to entertain a persuasion, that he is fore-ordained of God, as a vessel of mercy, when, at the same time, he demeans himself as one of wrath. It may be urged further, as a matter of fact, that very many of those who hold the opinions of individual election, and the indefectibility of grace, are amongst the most pious and holy of mankind; that they are too deeply impressed with a sense of their own high privilege, to act in a manner inconsistent with it or unworthy of it. It is a very possible, but not a necessary, consequence: we are not now speaking of the blessings and comforts which *may* accompany these opinions, but of the evils which, in times past, have been their immediate fruit, and of the mischiefs which are likely to result from them again. Our articles do not consider the case alluded to an impossible one; and there are passages in the history of our own country which will prove to us, that the perils spoken of are no vain phantoms, raised up for the mere sake of argument or debate.

Art. ix. ad
 finem.

² "Such is the plain unsophisticated import of the passage, as suggested by the whole context, and the nature of the illustration. Not that any *doubt* is implied of the Apostle's perseverance; but unless his failure was *possible*, it is difficult to account, with any tolerable satisfaction, for the use of such an expression." Slade's Annotations, in loc. The reader is also there referred to Bp. Bull's Refutation of the doctrine of final perseverance. Apol. pro Harmon. s. vii. 7—23; and Bp. Sherlock's Discourses, vol. ii. p. 81—83, 2nd edition. See also St. Chrys. in Rom. Hom. 32, where, with reference to this passage, he says, that St. Paul's heart trembled for the sins of others, Gal. iv. 11, feared also for itself, 1 Cor. ix. 27, and was confiding too, Rom. ix. 3.

³ In the Burial Service of our Church, this possibility is distinctly stated in the words, "suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death to fall from Thee." It is impossible to *fall from God*, without having been previously established in Him.

The puritans of the days of Charles I., who, as is notorious, were, almost to a man, advocates of and believers in this doctrine, considered themselves chosen instruments in the hand of God, to uproot the ancient landmarks of the constitution of their country: they were in their own conceit the army of God's saints, whose office it was "to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron." What they began in fanaticism they finished in blood: and, though the murder of their sovereign might indeed have tempted some to question, whether that were the Lord's will, the majority believed, that it was a part of their commission to smite and to slay all, who opposed themselves to their interpretation of that will. They were hurried on by the dark doctrines of fatalism from one step to another, in the vain idea, that they were God's elect, that the Spirit of the Lord was with them, that their desires, impulses, suggestions, were all of Him. History can hardly point to so fearful an instance of the success, with which fanaticism will lull to sleep the forebodings and misgivings of a life spent in blood, vainly supposed to be shed in God's service, as is to be found in the circumstances attendant on the death-bed of the rebel, murderer, yet enthusiast, Cromwell. On the night preceding his death, the wretched man, who had been, during the greater part of his illness, either insensible or delirious, had a lucid interval of considerable duration. "It might have been expected, that a man of his religious disposition would have felt some compunctious visitings, when, from the bed of death, he looked back on the strange, eventful career of his past life. But he had adopted a doctrine admirably calculated to lull and tranquillize the misgivings of conscience. 'Tell me,' said he to Sterry, one of his chaplains, 'is it possible to fall from grace?' 'It is not possible,' replied the minister. 'Then,' exclaimed the dying man, 'I am safe: for I know that I was once in grace.' Under this impression he prayed, not for himself, but for God's people. 'Lord,' he said, 'though a miserable and wretched creature, I am in covenant with Thee, through Thy grace, and may and will come to Thee for Thy people. Thou hast made me a mean instrument to do them some good, and Thee service.'" Such were the opiates, with

LECTURE
XXVIII.Ps. cxlix.
7, 8.Clarendon's
Hist. of the
Rebellion,
vol. iii. 230
—233.Lingard's
Hist. of
England,
vol. xi.
p. 354.

LECTURE which this miserable man endeavoured, and it would seem
 XXVIII. successfully, to hush the mental accusations that rose up
 against him in that awful hour.

Although it is well known, that the generality of persons, who take up these peculiar views of God's dealings with His creatures, believe themselves to be of the number of those who are elected to salvation, and thus make no question either of their present possession of divine grace, or of their final perseverance; yet a persuasion of the truth of these views may tend to most appalling results, in the minds of the unlearned, the over-sensitive, or the over-timid. It may lead to that unwarrantable despair, alluded to as the second danger connected with the Calvinistic interpretation of the mysterious doctrine of election. Are we yet to learn, that there are many cases, in which reason has been driven from her seat, through a conviction of personal unworthiness becoming so overpowering, as to suggest, first, the suspicion,—next, the all but certainty, that they, weak, unstable, and wicked as they are, can never be of the number of God's elect? Once impress upon a highly nervous temperament the full persuasion, that Calvin was right in his positions, and this result will very commonly, though, of course, not necessarily follow. How painfully were the declining years of the amiable, yet unhappy poet Cowper, clouded by the belief, that he was not one of those for whom Christ died,—that he had no individual interest in the benefits purchased for the world by the Redeemer's blood; but that he was, from all eternity, foredoomed a castaway, an outcast from the Almighty's favour,—an alien from His grace,—one, whom God had indeed created, but created only that He might damn. It may be urged, that these were the fantasies of a lunatic, and cannot be allowed to bear upon the question. We need not pause to enquire, how far these opinions led to that partial aberration of a mind, sane, and even powerful upon other points, though weak, and turned off its balance upon this. But let us see what may be the natural effect in other cases.

See Sou-
 they's Life
 of Cowper,
 vol. iii. p.
 135—137.

Persuade me, that the above-mentioned view of the doctrine of election is, not that of Calvin only, but of the Bible also, and how can you prove to me my personal interest in that doctrine? in other words, how can you prove to me that God

has chosen me, before the foundation of the world, as one of His elect and redeemed flock? The proof must depend mainly upon my impression that I am so. But my impressions I must doubt, for I cannot but feel, that the earnest wish to be of the number of the chosen may so far co-operate with my self-love, as to lead me to believe myself so, without its being actually the case. So, then, I may go on throughout the whole of my career in this world, secure in the persuasion that my soul is safe, and may awake in the next, only to discover my delusion and self-deception.

On the one hand, I may so think my calling and election sure, as to relax in my endeavours to "go on unto perfection," and to be unwearied in well-doing: conscious of security, I may forget, that there cannot be such a thing as elected idleness: and thus I may really dishonour God, in the vain attempt to honour Him, by abstaining from any effort to do any thing of myself. On the other hand, there is a fearful alternative before me. If I believe, with Calvin, that only God's elect, in his peculiar sense of the term, are to be saved, and that the rest of mankind, do what they will, are doomed, by His decree, to be of the number of the damned; and if I but suspect myself to be of this latter class, how is it possible, but that the suspicion must utterly destroy my love for God? How can I love Him who has given me an immortal soul, and yet, by denying me the grace which is needful for that soul's sanctification, has virtually consigned it, even before its trial, to the horrors of perdition? How can I be thankful for that Gospel, from the pages of which others can derive unspeakable comfort, and countless stores of spiritual support,—which speaks to them of the glorious themes of peace here, and acceptance hereafter, and yet to me is nothing but the record of God's punishment of a soul, foredoomed to be unsanctified and reprobate? To me the Gospel is not preached, if I am forbidden to avail myself of its conditions. Why should I be exhorted to repent, if repentance will stand me in no stead? Why am I called upon to exercise faith, when the result of that faith is an assurance of my own damnation? It is a mockery to talk to me of hope, when the utmost that I dare hope for is the gift of a few short years in this world, which, take it at the worst, with all its pains, and woes, and heaviness,

Heb. vi. 1.

LECTURE is, nevertheless, more endurable than the everlasting torments
XXVIII. of hell. And, as for the exercise of charity, what matters it to me, if the indulgence of my selfishness will not add to a condemnation, already fixed by an eternal and irrevocable decree? And oh! how can I look upon God as my spiritual Father, how feel myself the child of His anxiety and His love, if I am taught to believe it possible that, from eternity, He has resolved to shew me neither? What marvel is it, if doubts, and fears, and suspicions of this kind, should end, as they often have done, either in absolute madness, from despair,—or in infidelity, from the refusal of the soul to believe, that God can be, as He is represented by the Reformer of Geneva, influenced alone by the hidden consideration of His own glory, in the creation, election, and reprobation of mankind? It is, surely, not only happier for me, but more consonant with the general tenor of God's revelations, to understand, in their literal sense, the gracious words of Christ, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that *one* of these little ones should perish." It were better to believe the declarations of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John to the same effect: better to hold, with the early fathers of the primitive Church, that, though the prescience of God extends to all human actions, it does not (hard as it is to comprehend the mystery) interfere with, or over-rule the free agency of man:—that, though He arbitrarily selects nations to know Him, He does not arbitrarily forbid any individual to love Him, to serve Him, and to obey Him.

"God," says the venerable Cranmer, (how different in spirit from Calvin!) "God is naturally good, and willeth all men to be saved, and careth for them, and provideth all things by which they may be saved, except by their own malice they will be evil, and so, by righteous judgment of God, perish and be lost. For, truly, men be to themselves the authors of sin and damnation. God is neither author of sin, nor the cause of damnation. And yet doth He most righteously damn those men that do with vices corrupt their nature, which He made good; and do abuse the same to evil desires against His most holy will. Wherefore men be to be warned, that they do not impute to God their vice or their damnation, but to themselves, which by free will have abused the grace and benefits of God."

Matt. xviii.
14.

1 Tim. ii. 4.

2 Pet. iii. 9.

John iii. 16.

Necessary
 Doctrine,
 Art. of Free-
 will.
 See also
 Laurence's
 Bampton
 Lect. viii.
 p. 178.

The Christian disciple, then, who is not only deeply anxious to avoid making so fearful a use of that free will, with which God, in His mysterious mercy, has invested him, but is desirous also to put an end to his doubts, as to whether he is, or is not, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost,—will strive to affix some scriptural test, whereby he may prove the certainty of spiritual direction. LECTURE
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To offer an unfailing test of this guidance,—one which would apply equally to all cases, and to all persons,—were a task in which, it would be hard to say, whether difficulty or presumption predominated:—for, after all discussion and research, there is much that takes place between the conscience and the Holy One, which it is impossible for another's skill to fathom; much, too, which is perhaps but indistinctly known even by ourselves.

Thus far, however, we can decide with boldness; that there are qualities, amiable, attractive, and endearing, loved by society, and commended by the world, which may nevertheless exist independently of the grace of God; whilst there are others, which the Spirit of the Most High can alone infuse into the heart of fallen man.

When we meet with one of those gentle tempers, that nothing apparently can ruffle,—which is superior to all those petty excitements, or real insults, that rouse the passions of a fiercer nature; we are willing, nay, we are often anxious, to believe, that it is the spirit of Christianity which we see thus amiably developed. It may be so,—but it is not, of necessity, the case: we may so love the effect, as not to be over curious in investigating the cause. This gentle disposition may exist in the man, without any reference to the Christian; it may be accompanied by lust, by immorality, by almost every mark, save this one redeeming point, of an unconverted heart. It may be found in the atheist, or the infidel. It was a peculiar feature in many of the unsophisticated natives of the new world; it has been strikingly displayed in the heroes and sages of antiquity; and the well-known mild reply of the celebrated Athenian captain,—“Strike me, but hear me,”—proceeded from the lips of one who was, at once, a venal citizen, and a questionable patriot.

We may say the same thing of honesty, of patriotism, of justice, of benevolence, of liberality, and of many other virtues

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of a similar character. Of course, it is not meant to deny, or to decry the value of these several dispositions of mind, either personally, or relatively. Whatever may be their source, they are still indications of a mind, to a certain extent, morally regulated : but let us not forget, that, speaking as Christians, no morality is acceptable in the sight of God, which has not its origin in Christian principle. Morality may exist in one, who has no sense of his own sinfulness, either personal or inherited ; in one, who does not feel his need of a Saviour and Intercessor ; in one, who experiences no painful want of the sanctifying influences of the Spirit ; in one, who has no regard for the revealed word of God, His Church, His ordinances, His sabbaths, or His sacraments.

Nor is this danger of mistaking words for things, the shadow of godliness for its legitimate substance, confined to the mere moralist. When we see a man of deep religious knowledge, one, who can talk well and eloquently upon religious matters, one who is, apparently, zealous in the cause of God and the Gospel ; it would seem to some to be an uncharitable, if not an unscriptural assumption, were we to assert the possibility of such a man's not being in a state of grace, and, consequently, not actuated by the Spirit of God. Uncharitable indeed, and unscriptural withal would our position be, were it a proven point, that grace and knowledge are synonymous terms. But the very tendency of knowledge is unduly to exalt the mind, unless it be kept humble by daily prayer and watchfulness. Its natural effect is not to keep it in that state of spiritual subjection, which is ever the accompaniment of grace.

- 1 Cor. viii. 1. "Knowledge," says the Apostle, "puffeth up ;" and the same holy writer testifies, that it were possible for him to be as "nothing," though he had "the gift of prophecy, and understood all mysteries, and all knowledge." Thus, though it be true that, as grace increases, knowledge will advance, it does not follow that, when the Christian disciple is progressing in knowledge, he is therefore growing in grace. The prophet Balaam speaks of himself, as of the man whose eyes were opened ; "which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High :—" but to say that Balaam was a chosen vessel of the grace of God, would be to deny the truth of Scripture itself.

Numb. xxiv.
15, 16.

There is in religion, as in other things, a fashion ; and there are few of us, who have not at times witnessed a powerful display of it, whilst we have been mournfully conscious that there has been little of the Spirit of Christ in the exhibition. There are some dispositions of so ardent and enthusiastic a character, so restless in searching out for themselves causes of high mental excitement, that they will cling to the severest practices of religion (so to speak), as a portion of the daily requirements of their nature. It is the temperament, here, which is the cause of their shaping for themselves a stricter course of religious obligation, than is the custom of those around them ; the temperament, which prides itself upon many an act of self-denial, a matter perhaps of no intrinsic moment, but made a point of paramount concern ; the temperament, which charges the tongue with Scripture phraseology, and with conventional terms, too often sadly misused, and as often singularly misapplied ; the temperament, which passes a hasty, and, not unfrequently, an unfounded censure upon others, whose colder or less sensitive nature is not subject to such violent ebullitions of feeling ; the temperament, which prompts them to regard the more sober and unpretending disciples as unconverted, and as aliens from the grace of God, mainly because they either will not, or cannot, go all lengths, nor adopt the same precise views of doctrine, or of discipline, with themselves. And it is the temperament, which, to a spirit thus moulded, when it basks, as it were, in the sunshine of its own presumed godliness, and looks, with complacent pity, upon its apparently less gifted neighbour,—it is this, which prompts the heart to say, “I am holier than thou.” There is but little of the real influence of Christianity, in a heart which is thus marked, with lack of humility with reference to self, and of charity with regard to others.

Is. lxxv. 5.

We are not, then, to look for the unfailing signs of grace in amiable dispositions, nor in well-regulated tempers ;—not in decent habits, not in well-ordered lives, not in an extensive knowledge of the principles of the Christian faith, nor yet in an attention to its forms and ordinances. We must seek a surer test ; and endeavour to discover some more certain method of estimating the value, and proving the sincerity, of our religious impressions.

LECTURE
XXVIII.Gal. v.
19—21.2 Pet. ii. 10.
Jude 8.

Ps. xix. 12.

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, after having described that twofold struggle, which is perpetually carried on between the flesh and the Spirit for the dominion of the soul of man,—proceeds to guide the Christian warrior in this conflict, by laying clearly before him, what are the works of the flesh, and what the fruits of the Spirit. “Now the works of the flesh,” he says, “are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.” There is no mystery here:—every man, as he hears or reads this dark catalogue of human guilt, can decide the question for himself, (if it be asked in a godly desire to ascertain the truth,) whether he is compelled to plead guilty to the commission of any one of these offences. Every man can sit in judgment on his own soul, if so he will, and enquire of his conscience, “Am I addicted to the foul sins of sensuality, which the pure mind of the Apostle here condemns? Is there a being upon earth, of whom I say, I hate him? Do I indulge in those petty quarrels, which bring nought but bitterness and disquiet in their train? Am I prone to wrath, to strife, to emulation, or to envy? It may be that I have not murdered; but have I done that which is akin to it, given the rein to hasty temper, or to angry passions,—been violent, malicious, revengeful, or morose? Have I ever scorned the authority of those whom God has set over me, as my worldly rulers or spiritual directors, despised dominion, or spoken evil of dignities? Have I,” (to conclude this brief summary, in the Apostle’s order,) “have I,” he might ask, “wasted in ungodly revellings, in rioting and drunkenness, that precious gift of irrecoverable time, which was given me by the Almighty, that I might use it to my own soul’s profit, and to His eternal glory?”

There are some amongst these treasons against religion so plainly scandalous, that they can be committed by no one, who has the slightest understanding of his soul’s value, and its responsibility: but there are others, which steal upon us in a more covert form; and are, doubtless, amongst those secret sins, those unwitting transgressions, from which David prayed to be delivered and cleansed. It is here that is our greatest peril; here that our watchfulness and self-examination must chiefly

be called into action. The earnest enquirer after divine truth will look well into his own heart and see, if it be or be not defiled by any one of these offences,—offences, of the very least of which the conscience whispers the moral disgrace,—crimes, of which the Apostle declares the spiritual danger,—yea, “of the which,” he says, “I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Gal. v. 21.

But although, by the blessing of the Holy One, we may be unpolluted by any of the grosser sins enumerated by St. Paul, never let the Christian soul forget, that its spirituality of character does not rest upon the mere negative merit of abstaining from evil; it must also “covet earnestly the best gifts,” and “diligently follow every good work,” lest, after all, it “fail of the grace of God.”

1 Cor. xii. 31.
1 Tim. v. 10.
Heb. xii. 15.

Nor is it so impossible a task for the Christian to examine himself, point by point, until he ascertains, whether he is simply influenced by the amiable qualities of the natural man, or really under the tutelage and influence of the Spirit of God. Let St. Paul be again our guide. “The fruit of the Spirit,” says the holy man, “is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Here, then, is our test. If “love” towards God, for His own sake, engenders love towards man, for God’s sake; if a holy “joy” thrills through the believer’s heart, at each fresh enlargement of Christ’s spiritual kingdom; if he feels himself privileged to rejoice, in that he has been made partaker of “the unsearchable riches of Christ;” if “peace” is the result of a constant communion with his God, a peace reflected from himself to others; if “long-suffering” and “gentleness” attest the effect of Christ’s counsel and example, by producing a recognition of the one, and a humble practice of the other; if “goodness” exhibits itself in that benevolent exercise of offices of Christian love, which prompts it to do good to all within its influence and reach; if “faith” holds fast the glorious promises of God revealed to us in Holy Writ, and shews, by its actions, that it does not exist in name alone; if “meekness” is content to follow at humble distance in the track of Him, whose whole life was an exemplification of His precept, “Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly of heart;”

Gal. v. 22, 23.

Ephes. iii. 8.

Matt. xi. 29.

LECTURE if "temperance" keeps in full subjection "the lust of the flesh,
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1 John ii.
 16.

and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;"—if all this bright array of Christian graces be visibly developed in the daily walk of life, and as visibly exercised for Christ's sake,—why doubt we, then, but that the Spirit of Christ has indeed mingled itself with our spirit, making us thus manifestly wise unto salvation, and proving, that we do indeed "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ

Phil. iii. 14. Jesus?"

Whilst, then, a singleness and purity of motive will be the test of the Spirit's influence,—consistent personal and practical holiness will be the evidence of the Spirit's presence: founded, each of them, upon that faith, which gratefully accepts the Scriptures, as the very and unerring word of God; and attempered, each, by that gentle spirit of Charity, without which, whatever may be his remaining gifts and graces, the professing Christian is pronounced by the Apostle, to be as worthless as the sounding brass, as empty as the tinkling cymbal.

LECTURE XXIX.

MATT. xviii. 17.

“If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

THERE are perhaps few, if any clauses of our Creed, which are repeated so much as matters of course, without any definite meaning being attached to them, as that, in which we profess to believe in “the Holy Catholic Church.” And yet there is scarcely one, which, with reference to the soundness of our Christian belief, deserves a more dispassionate enquiry, or demands a clearer comprehension ¹.

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Knowing, as we do, that the Church of Rome arrogates to herself the exclusive right to the title of “Catholic,” and hearing, as we do, many unthinking members of the Church of England virtually conceding this right, by attaching, or confining that title to those who thus assume it,—it is fitting, that every member of Christ’s Holy Catholic Church in England should understand the real claims that she possesses to his affection, and the false title that the Church of Rome can have either to his allegiance, or to her own pretensions.

In these days there is more need of a careful investigation of this point, since many a subtle disputant of Rome will taunt the unlearned members of our own communion with inconsistency, in, Sunday after Sunday, solemnly professing their belief in the “Holy Catholic Church,” and in praying for her “good estate,”—whilst they refuse their obedience to

¹ The more ancient creeds had only “the Holy Church.” Cyprian, Epist. 76. s. 6. Tertull. adv. Marc. 1. v. c. 4, &c. The word “Catholic” was afterwards added by the Greeks, by way of explication; from whom it was received by the Latins, and by them inserted in their creed, wherein we now read “the Holy Catholic Church.” King on the Creed, c. vi. p. 325. Pearson in loc.

LECTURE XXIX. her authority ;—an objection which is founded upon the assumption, that the clause in question refers exclusively to the Romish Church : and this declaration has been repeated so often, and with such an apparent tone of triumph, that those who are not careful to examine the title-deeds of the claimants, are apt to give them credit for the lawful possession of the inheritance.

The literal meaning of the word, which we translate “Church,” is an assembly or body of men, picked out from the rest of mankind. “Its ordinary application in Scripture is to a society of Christians, or of those who believe in Christ ; God Himself, according to Scripture, has ‘called’ all such ‘out of darkness into His marvellous light ;’ ‘so that,’ as it is said elsewhere, ‘It is not of him that willet, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.’” In reading the Apostolic writings much confusion has arisen from supposing, that the word Church is always used in one and the same sense. When, for example, St. Paul tells us, that Christ gave Himself “for the Church,” “that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish ;” it seems impossible, that the holy writer could have meant to give this as a definition of that visible Church, which contains within itself all the professed believers in Christianity,—that kingdom of heaven, in which tares spring up together with the wheat,—that net, which comprises within its folds the good and the bad, indifferently. We must rather suppose the Apostle to have spoken here, of that mystical and invisible Church, peopled by the truly sanctified alone,—those armies of departed saints, and martyrs, and prophets, to whom it is given to rejoice over their warfare accomplished, their iniquity pardoned, and their reward begun. Although it may be the privilege, even of the visible Church, to arrive at this high standard of Christian perfection, yet painful experience proves to us, that in this, its militant state, the bad passions of many of its individual members have ever prevented so desirable a consummation. The Church, therefore, in the more general acceptance of the term, may be understood as “the whole society of Christians throughout the world, including all who profess their belief in Christ, and who are subject to lawful

See Pearson's learned note, vol. ii. p. 455.
1 Pet. ii. 9.

Palmer's Ch. of Christ, vol. i. p. 3.
Rom. ix. 16.

Ephes. v. 25. 27.

Matt. xiii. 37—48.

Palmer ut supra, p. 4.

pastors." It was of a Church like this that the Apostle spoke, when he said, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God:" and again, "God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers."—The sense in which the word is used is even yet more restricted, when it refers to the Church of God at Antioch, Jerusalem, and the like, together with the seven Churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation. It is in this sense, as speaking of the Church as a part of the great Catholic whole, that we use the term "Church of England," as applied to that branch of the Apostolic Church which it has pleased God to plant in these kingdoms. And lastly, we perceive a more limited use of the term, when it is adopted in allusion to a single Christian family, or to a small knot of Christians assembled in that family, for the purposes of public worship.

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1 Cor. x. 32.

1 Cor. xii.
28.

Rev. i. 4.

Rom. xvi. 5.

Coloss. iv.

15.

Philem. 2.

It is in its general application to the whole community of professing Christians, that the word is used in the Creed: Holy in its origin, its design, its doctrine, its discipline, and its effects: "Catholic, or universal," in that it is "made up of the collection of all particular Churches;—Catholic, in respect of time, comprehending all ages to the world's end, to which it is to endure;—Catholic, in respect of all places, out of which believers are to be gathered;—Catholic, in respect of all saving faith, of which this Creed contains the substance, which shall in it always be taught;—Catholic, in respect of all graces, which shall in it be practised; and Catholic, in respect of that Catholic war it is to wage against all its ghostly enemies, for which it is called militant."

Bp. Ken's
Divine
Love, in loc.

The circumstances, under which God was pleased to reveal Himself in covenant before the coming of Christ, more clearly shew the propriety of this term, as applicable to the Christian Church. Up to that time, the single nation of the Jews possessed the exclusive privilege, of being God's Church in the world. With them alone was Jehovah in covenant; to them, specifically, were covenant blessings limited; their's was the exclusive privilege of knowing whom they served: they stood alone in the world,—God's chosen people or Church; not Catholic, but particular. It was the type of the Christian Church. To them was God revealed, on them were ordinances

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XXIX.John xix.
30.Matt. xxvii.
51.

enjoined. They had their sacraments, they had their written word: in all essential respects, save in its Catholicity, were shadowed forth the future blessings of the Christian covenant. And this privilege, of being exclusively the Church of God, remained to them, until their rejection of Him who came to exchange the shadow for the substance, the type of blessing for its actual possession. At the moment when Christ declared, "It is finished,"—when the mysterious veil, which hitherto had shrouded the inmost secrets of the sanctuary, "was rent in twain from the top to the bottom,"—Israel's polity was dissolved,—his hierarchy set aside,—his peculiar privileges taken from him,—and the gates of God's mercy were flung open to the world. From that moment the Church assumed a new character; and her ministers were invested with a new commission. Hitherto, the aim and office of both had been, to confine the knowledge of the true God to one chosen people: it was a system of preparation, calculated to keep alive the hopes, which the promises and prophecies of Scripture respecting Christ had raised.

Then, in its new form, its object was to disperse that knowledge in a more extended manner: to reveal God in His threefold character, of Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, to the utmost ends of the earth; and to infuse, the something more than hope, the certainty of salvation, to those who should acknowledge their Saviour in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Lect. xxv.
p. 288.Acts i. 13—
26.Lect. xxv.
p. 292.

Acts ii. 41.

The first assembly of the Church of Christ, properly so called, was in that lowly chamber where the faithful met, after the ascension of their Lord, to incorporate one of their number into the twelve, as a witness of His resurrection. It was not long, before an important addition was made to the members of the Church; for, as we have seen, at the preaching of the first Christian Sermon on the day of Pentecost, there were added to their number "about three thousand souls."

Ib. 47.

From this time we are distinctly told, that God took the Church under His own especial patronage; for "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

As time grew on, and as believers multiplied, the various duties imposed upon the Apostles (who were the first overseers of the flock of Christ) were so extensive, as to require

the introduction of fresh labourers into the vineyard of the Lord. It was then that the order of deacons was instituted; LECTURE
XXIX. professedly, that the Apostles, as the heads of the Church, might not have their attention distracted from the peculiar duties which belonged to their high office, by "serving tables;" by being busied, that is, in the superintendence of those minor details, which could, with equal advantage to the Church, be delegated to their officials.

Acts vi. 1—6.

And these two orders of apostles and deacons, supported, as they were, by the immediate advocacy of the Holy Ghost, appear to have been amply sufficient for the spiritual and temporal wants of the Church, as long as the Gospel message was confined to the limits of Judæa and Samaria. Yet so conscious do the Apostles appear of the necessity of the Church rallying under some one temporal head, that their last act, before departing respectively on their missionary labours, was to appoint James, the brother of our Lord, overseer or bishop (for the terms are identically the same) over the Church established at Jerusalem; and that they themselves, Apostles as they were, paid a certain sort of deference to this head, is clear from the fact of St. James having presided at the first Apostolic council at Jerusalem, and having given the sentence of the body in his own name, as their chief, though acting with their sanction and concurrence ². It was precisely the same as if, in these days, an archbishop were to pronounce an ecclesiastical sentence, decided upon by him, in concert with his suffragan bishops.

Acts xii. 17.

Burton's
Lect. on
Eccles. Hist.
iv. vol. i.
p. 100.

Acts xv.
13—21.
Gal. ii. 12.

But when the Apostles went beyond the limits of their native land, and, in obedience to their Master's commands, preached the Gospel to every nation under heaven,—when they planted churches in the cities of the Gentiles, we gather from the general tenor of Scripture, in some cases distinctly expressed, in others implied, that, at their departure, they did not leave their churches, so founded, without some kind of ecclesiastical government. They ordained elders or presbyters in every church. Their practice would naturally be to select the most experienced, and the most pious amongst their

Acts xiv. 23.
Burton's
Lect. on
Eccles.
Hist. v.
vol. i. p. 149.

² It was an early opinion of the Church, that St. James was appointed to this high office by our Lord Himself. Euseb. vii. 19. Epiph. Hær. lxxviii. 7. Chrys. Hom. xxxviii. 5, in 1 Cor. xv.

LECTURE
XXIX.See Lect.
xxv. p. 294.

Eph. iv. 11.

Ib. 12, 13,

Ib. 14.

Acts xv. 2.

Ib. 31.

Ib. xi. 29,
30.

flock, commissioning them to teach and to preach, when they themselves should be called to carry on their labours elsewhere. They were permitted to invest these elders with a portion, at least, of the same Spirit which rested upon themselves. Acting under the instigation of the Holy Ghost, in His name they appointed "some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers:" and, as the Holy Scripture is careful to mention the fact, so it is not silent as to the intent of the institution; it was for the "perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;" it was, that all, to whom the Gospel was preached, should come in "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." It was, that the great principles of the Gospel should be preached after some settled standard, and with some authority; that the believers might "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness:" for, even then was it foreseen, that there would be heresies and schisms,—evils, which these very authorities were, by God's counsel, mercifully intended, at least, to qualify³. That these Churches, so established, all rallied under one episcopal head whose authority they recognized as paramount, may be shewn, first, from their referring to the Apostolic council at Jerusalem in cases of doubt and difficulty; and secondly, from their receiving the commands of that council in answer, as authoritative; and thirdly, from their voluntarily sending pecuniary assistance to the mother Church, when needed.

And further, when Churches were planted in places too distant from Jerusalem to render it possible for the Apostles to exercise that constant supervision, which was requisite for the well-being of the Church, they added to the number of their own privileged body, and sent Timothy to Ephesus, Titus to Crete, and Mark to Alexandria⁴.

1 Tim. i. 3.
Titus i. 5.
Euseb. ii. 24.

³ See, on this subject, the observations of St. Clement (Ep. ad Cor. 44), and the valuable notes affixed to Jacobson's edition of the Apostolical Fathers, Oxford, 1838.

⁴ It may not be without its interest, to give the testimony of the early Fathers to the establishment of episcopacy, in the several Churches founded by the

Thus, in the very earliest ages, we find not only, as we might have expected, a regular order of Church government, but precisely that kind of government which we have at the present hour. We perceive the division of the country into dioceses; the bishops acting under an archiepiscopal head; their ordaining for the services of the Church priests and deacons; and their consecrating bishops, when required, to superintend the more distant churches, and to exercise the same episcopal functions with themselves, in colonies beyond the reach of their own personal superintendence.

It is upon precisely the same principle, and acting under the same sense of duty, with the same recognition of the Church's wants, that the Church of England has multiplied her officers, as numbers, and consequently as duties and labours, have increased: hence, we find archdeacons, acting as the bishops' curates; rural deans, as assistants to the archdeacons; thus rendering toils lighter, and offices more efficient, when divided amongst the many.

In saying, then, that our system of Church government is founded upon the model of the primitive Church, we say but half the truth. We are to remember, that, what the Apostles

Apostles. It will serve to shew, first—how universally that form of Church government was laid down by men, who acted under divine, and therefore infallible guidance,—and secondly, how completely they recognized that sound rule, which has recently been put forward by a distinguished living prelate, viz. that “an Episcopal Church without a bishop is a contradiction in terms.”

James, consecrated Bishop of Jerusalem. Euseb. L. ii. c. 1, and vii. c. 19. Apost. Const. L. vii. 46. Cyril. Hieros. Catech. Lect. iv. 28. August. Lib. ii. contr. Litt. Petil. L. ii. c. 51. Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccl. in Jacob. Chrys. Hom. xxxviii. s. 5. in 1 Cor. xv.

Timothy, Bishop at Ephesus. Euseb. L. iii. c. 4. Ambros. Præfat. in 1 Tim. Tertull. contr. Marc. L. v. Chrys. Hom. x. in 1 Tim. s. 2.

Titus, at Crete. Euseb. L. iii. c. 4. Ambros. Præf. in Ep. ad Tit. Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccles. in Tit. Theodoret. ap. Œcum. in Præf. in Tit. Theophylact in Tit.

Mark, at Alexandria. Euseb. L. ii. c. 24. Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccl. in Marc. Gregor. M. L. vi. Ep. 37. al. 201.

Linus, and Clement, at Rome. Iren. L. iii. s. 3. Euseb. L. iii. c. 4. Tertull. de Præsc. adv. Hær. 32.

Polycarp, at Smyrna. Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccl. in Polyc. Tertull. de Præsc. adv. Hær. 32. Iren. L. iii. c. 3. s. 4. Euseb. L. iv. c. 14.

Ignatius, at Antioch. Euseb. L. iii. c. 22.

See also Chillingworth's Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy demonstrated; Jeremy Taylor's Episcopacy asserted; and the note at the end of this Lecture.

LECTURE XXIX. did, they did under the immediate instigation of the Holy Ghost: we then, in building upon their foundations, and in acting, as far as we can, upon their principles, are setting up no human institution,—but one which has had the sanction of God Himself; one, which the same God has pledged

Heb. xiii. 5. Himself to strengthen with His abiding presence.

The primitive Church, so founded, was careful, as a body, to abide by the Apostle's precept, to "speak the same thing,"—"to avoid divisions,"—to be "perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment." And so, it was Catholic in principle, inasmuch as its members adhered to one general doctrine, held fast the form of sound words committed to them, and boldly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints. It was Catholic in practice, inasmuch as it adhered to one universal and divinely-appointed system of ecclesiastical government. True it is, that, though the members of the primitive Church were, collectively, careful to adhere to the Apostolic rule enjoined for their observance, there were individuals amongst them who dissented from her general voice, who substituted their own inventions for the pure faith of Christ, and who taught for doctrines the commandments of men. But the Church, as a careful mother, was too anxious for the spiritual welfare of her children, to suffer these heretical vagaries to pass without comment or rebuke; and in the unqualified expostulations of the Apostles, and in their unsparing condemnation of those, who thus violated that unity of the Church, for which Christ so earnestly prayed unto the Father, we clearly see what was their mind upon this subject; nay, considering the authority under which they acted, what was the judgment of God Himself, upon the unchristian sin of schism.

John xvii.
20, 21.

See Hook-
er's first
Sermon on
Jude.

Rom. xvi.
17.
1 Cor. xii.
25.

The desire of the primitive Church to preserve, in all its soundness, the pure faith of the Gospel, will be best seen by a careful study of the history of the early ages of Christianity. Fully did her rulers act upon the counsel of St. Paul,—“mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” So watchful were they over the interest of those whom God had committed to their charge, and so conscious were they of the deep responsibility inseparable from their high commission,

that no sooner did heresy make her appearance, than the Church was in arms as the champion of orthodoxy; a watchfulness, which in these liberal days, we may reasonably fear, would be immediately branded as the result of that exclusive spirit of bigotry, which would allow no creed but its own; but which, in times nearer to the fountain-head of Apostolic truth, and under a system beneath the visible protection of the Holy Ghost, was known, and felt, and acted upon, as a duty, from which they could not for one instant relax, without a positive dereliction of Christian principle.

Hence, we have the Apostle Paul not only guarding against heresy in his own diocese,—but in his charge to Timothy, impressing upon his “own son in the faith,” (the bishop whom he had ordained to preside over the Ephesian Church,) the necessity of similar watchfulness:—and we may safely say, that the plain speaking, which the Apostle adopted towards the sectarians of his own days, would, in modern times, meet with a very questionable reception, even at the hands of many, who style themselves friends of the Church. There is reason to fear, that it would be considered as somewhat exclusive by that class of professing Christians, who love the praise of men more than the praise of God; who prefer to be popular in the sight of the unthinking, by a willingness to fling down the wall of separation between the orthodox and the latitudinarian, to being conscientious in the sight of the saints of God, through a pious determination to keep that which has been committed to their trust.

In like manner, we find St. John called upon, in extreme old age, by the elders of the Asiatic Church, to write his Gospel, for the express purpose of confuting heresy, and of establishing the Catholic doctrines of Christianity.

Hieron. in
Matt.
Lect. vii.
p. 67.

The same desire is traceable in the addition of clause after clause to the Apostles' Creed, as each successive heresy seemed to require an antidote to the poison, attempted to be infused into the simple elements of Gospel truth: and hence too, at a later period, we find bishops, from every branch of Christ's Church, meeting in solemn conclave to condemn the opinions of the arch-heretic Arius. And the Nicene Creed may be received, not only as the protest of the Church against heresy, but as an acknowledgment of her duty to put forth that

Lecture xiii.
p. 135.

Ib. p. 140.

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protest. And so, for a long period, the Church was the champion of orthodoxy; and, as a Church, remained free from corruption, either with regard to doctrine or discipline. It was well with her efficiency, and her good name, as long as her rulers adhered to those two sound principles, upon which our own reformers acted;—as long, that is, as they referred to the Scriptures only, as the standard of their doctrines,—paying a general deference to the voice of the primitive Church, in the interpretation of those doctrines; and, secondly, as long as they adhered, as closely as they could, to that system of ecclesiastical government which was laid down by the Apostles,—suffering, the while, each church to arrange for itself its own minor points of detail, according as circumstances seemed from time to time to require.

It was not until these sound principles were abandoned,—not until her temporalities were coveted as matters of personal aggrandizement, rather than as human means of furthering the great work of preaching and planting the Gospel in distant lands,—not until her power, either supposed or real, of bestowing or withholding spiritual blessings, was perverted by human ambition to worldly purposes, instead of being used to comfort the godly, or to restrain the sinner,—not until the Bishop of Rome began to claim an authority, and privileges, and ascendancy, never dreamed of by the Apostles themselves,—not until the catholicity of Christ's Church was merged in the individuality of a single see, that the work of corruption began.

It was then, that the Church endeavoured to set up her own fallible dogmas, side by side with the revelations of divine truth; then, that the study of the Bible (the only true standard of orthodoxy) was neglected, for the fantasies of the schoolmen. It was then that we hear of transubstantiation, purgatory, and penance; then, that the invocation of saints and angels, the veneration of images and relics began; then, that they raised, upon the foundation of faith in Christ, a superstructure of forms, and ceremonies, and superstitious observances, unknown in the simple ages of the primitive Church; all of them, more or less, connected with the pecuniary profit of those, who commanded them to be observed: and, in the midst of all this corruption, the Church of Rome arrogated to

herself the exclusive title of the Catholic Church, at the very time when she had most departed from those principles, which were recognized as Catholic in the days of the Apostolic Church.

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And so time grew on;—the Church, which called itself Catholic, becoming more and more diseased, and more and more powerful, (for ignorance, and war, and discord, were strong contributing causes for the extension of her power over other countries, and more especially over this,) until men found leisure, and the advance of education gave them the desire, to search for themselves and see, if those things were in accordance with the true spirit of the Gospel. Upon enquiry followed suspicion, and with examination came conviction, of the falsity of the pretensions of the Romish Church to the title and the claims, which she had so unscripturally assumed. They could stand the test neither of Scripture, nor of antiquity: the works of the early fathers gave no sanction to the real novelties of Rome; and then, as now, her advocates were compelled to resort to the writings of a later age for their defence, and to justify their own departure from Catholic principles, by an appeal to writers, who had substituted their own false glosses for the unadulterated word of God.

It was the dawn of the Reformation:—and, in looking back to those days of religious discord, it is impossible not to lament, that so much of individual interest and worldly feeling was mixed up with a discussion, which, if it had been carried on, on both sides, with Christian temper, and with reference to the two great principles already alluded to, might have led to the happiest results; might have restored the unity of the Catholic Church, and healed the breaches which corruption had made in the tenets, and superstition engrafted upon the observances of the Roman branch of it.

See p. 342.

Each party took its stand: the one, protesting against the enormities of the Church of Rome, refused to admit any thing as binding upon the conscience, which might not be proved by the most certain warrant of Holy Writ;—the other, declining to abide by any such standard, rested upon her claim to infallibility; and in the decrees of the Tridentine Council pledged herself to the maintenance of opinions, which, though

LECTURE XXIX. not heard of as a part of primitive doctrine, had long floated on the surface of public opinion, without the sanction of any definite authority.

The line drawn,—she cannot now recede; nor take her place again as a pure branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, without resigning her claim to that very title, upon which the main defence of her peculiar opinions depends,—infallibility.

We have, confessedly, derived the revival, in great part at least, of our Christian knowledge, through the channel of the Church of Rome⁵; and yet at the same time, although we admit her claim to be called a branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, in that she has kept up, from the days of the Apostles, an unbroken line of ministering priests, lawfully called, and episcopally ordained,—we deny that she is otherwise than a corrupt branch, because she refuses to walk in the steps of the Apostles, declines to abide by the practices or precepts of the primitive Church, and has overlaid the simplicity of the faith with her own traditions, false doctrines, and, we might almost add, idolatries.

For four centuries and a half we were more or less conformists to her opinions, and virtually submitted to her ecclesiastical jurisdiction. How then, on the one hand, can we reply to her assertion, that, as we are dissenters from her communion, and thus schismatics ourselves, we have no right to condemn others, who only follow our example, in dissenting from us? how, on the other, are we to answer the objection of the sectarian, who will not recognize the authority of our Church, deriving as she does, in part at least, the ordination of her ministry from a source admitted to be impure?

To the first we answer,—that we are not dissenters from the Church of Rome, as all her authority over us was an act of usurpation, not only never contemplated by the Apostolic

⁵ When Augustine, that is, was sent by Pope Gregory the Great, for the benevolent purpose of converting our pagan forefathers, A.D. 596. But, we must not forget, that there were other lawful labourers in the field, at much the same time. In the seventh century, the kingdom of Mercia was converted to Christianity by Finan, Diuma, Ceollach, and Trumhere, all Irish bishops. The kingdom of Northumberland, the counties of Essex, Middlesex, and Hertford, the Picts and Scots, owed their conversion to the same source. Bede's Eccl. Hist. b. iii. c. 3. 22.

Church, but the very principle of which was even condemned by the ecclesiastical authority of earlier, and better days⁶. LECTURE
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To the second we might answer,—that our ordinations are traceable to Rome, not in the days of her corruption, but of her purity: to the days, when the fountain-head was unsullied by the grosser abominations with which after-ages defiled it. But we must take higher ground, and reply also,—that, as by the judgment of our Church the unworthiness of her ministers does not invalidate the efficacy of the sacraments,—so, by parity of reasoning, the corruption of a Church, apostolically descended, cannot nullify the validity of her ordinations⁷. A slight sketch of the history of the Church of England will confirm both these positions. Art. xxvi.

As to the exact time when Christianity was first planted in this country, history is silent. Some have imagined, that we owe the kindling of our torch of Divine light to the instrumentality of St. Paul; other traditions of the Church mention Joseph of Arimathæa, as the first preacher of the Gospel in this land. “The most plausible tradition,” according to Southey, “says that it was Bran, the father of Caractacus, who, having been led into captivity with his son, and hearing the word at Rome, received it, and became, on his return, the means of delivering his countrymen from a worse bondage. There is also some reason to believe, that Claudia, who is spoken of together with Pudens by the Apostle Paul, was

Stilling-
fleet's Orig.
Brit. c. 1.

Gildas, de
Excid. et
Conquest.
Brit. c. 6.

⁶ “The general council of Ephesus, A.D. 431,” says Archbishop Bramhall, “declared, that no bishop should occupy any province, which before that council, and ‘from the beginning,’ had not been under the jurisdiction of him and his predecessors; and that if any patriarch usurped any jurisdiction over a free province, ‘he should quit it;’ for so ‘it pleased,’ not the Pope, but ‘the holy synod,’ that every province should ‘enjoy its ancient rights pure and inviolate.’ Now if it shall evidently appear, that the Bishops of Rome never exercised any manner of jurisdiction over the Britannie Churches *from the beginning* . . . then Rome can pretend no *right* over Britain, without their own consents, nor any farther, nor for any longer time, than they are pleased to oblige themselves.” Bramhall’s *Just Vindication of the Church of England*, p. i. Disc. ii. p. 158, ed. 1842. Ruffinus, who wrote not long after the council of Nice, limits the patriarchate of Rome to a part of Italy, and three islands, Sardinia, Sicily, and Corsica. *Ib.* p. 156. Ruffin. *Hist. Eccl.* L. i. c. 6. See Dodsworth’s *Treatise on the Unity of the Church*, p. 17.

⁷ It is upon this principle, that a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, who becomes a member of the Church of England, is enrolled at once into the order of her priesthood without any re-ordination.

LECTURE **XXIX.** a British lady of this illustrious household ; because a British

See Foxe's
Acts and
Mon. vol. i.
p. 308—311.
ed. 1841.
Southey's
Book of the
Church, c. ii.
p. 12.

Tertull. adv.
Jud. de
Nativ.
Christi.
s. 7.
Orig. Hom.
iv. in Ezech.
s. 1.
Stillington's
Orig. Brit. c. 2.
Comm.
vol. iv.
b. iv. c. 8.

Foxe's
Acts and
Mon. vol. i.
p. 327.

Euseb. L.
viii. c. 2.

Gildas,
c. 23.

A.D. 596.

woman of that name is known to have been the wife of Pudens at that time. Legends, which rest upon less credible ground, pretend that a British king called Lucius, who was tributary to the Romans, was baptized with many of his subjects. These things are doubtful : 'the light of the word shone here,' says Fuller, the Church historian, 'but we know not who kindled it.'"

Tertullian and Origen, both speak of Christianity having penetrated to the British isles in their days ; and we find three British bishops attending and assisting at the council held at Arles, A.D. 314. "Thus," says Blackstone (no mean authority), "the ancient British Church, by whomsoever planted, was a stranger to the bishop of Rome and all his pretended authority."

Under the dominion of the Roman emperors, many of whose officers were Christians, the faith flourished, with but few, and those occasional, interruptions from the higher powers. They appear at first to have escaped the persecutions, to which their continental brethren were exposed, until the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, A.D. 303.

Eusebius tells us that, at that time, the Christian Churches throughout the world were levelled with the ground,—their very foundations dug up,—all the copies of the Scriptures, which could any where be found, burnt in the open market-place,—and the bishops and pastors of the Church murdered together with their flocks ;—so that, in some provinces, scarcely a vestige of Christianity was left : and these remarks will apply, in a great measure, to the circumstances of the Church of England. Brighter days were in store for her, under the dominion of the British-born Emperor Constantine ; and it may be said, that she was in a flourishing condition until the departure of the Romans in the year 426. We may date her first decay from the year 449, when the Saxons, upon the invitation of Vortigern, landed and established themselves in Britain.

The British Church soon felt the iron hand of their ruthless heathen invaders ; and so effectually had Saxon violence and superstition uprooted the faith of Christ, that, when Augustine commenced his missionary labours in the Isle of

Thanet, there were but few traces of Christianity remaining in the country, except in the more remote and inaccessible parts of it. LECTURE
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The lamp of life, once rekindled, burnt fast and steadily ; for we find that, within little more than a year, ten thousand of the English were baptized members of the Church. And this was effected solely by the innate power of truth ; for we are expressly told, that no violence was used to effect conversion in any one : and it should not be forgotten, that one of the first cares of Augustine was, in conformity with the apostolical practice, to ordain bishops, to preside over the Churches of the more distant parts of the country. All these circumstances took place before the appearance of the peculiar corruptions of the Church of Rome. And we,—in tracing the succession of our ordained ministers to Augustine, who derived both his consecration and his ordination from a long succession of bishops, carried up in an unbroken line to the Apostles themselves,—are able to lay claim to the self-same privilege, namely, the possession of a ministry ordained by bishops, who derive their authority in direct succession from Christ, who ordained His Apostles as the first bishops of the Christian Church.

Bede, l. i. c. 25. 29.
Foxe's Acts and Mon. vol. i. p. 337.
Churton's Hist. of the Ch. p. 40.

Indebted, as we were, for being a second time ushered into the privileges of the Gospel covenant, to Pope Gregory, under whose authority and counsel Augustine visited these shores, it was both natural and becoming, that an intimate and even affectionate feeling should exist between the Bishop of Rome and our Anglo-Saxon forefathers. But unqualified submission was not yielded ; for the Roman Pontiff, “ when opposed to domestic judgment, was not in any degree respected, either as an ecclesiastical, or a doctrinal authority.”

Soames's Bampton Lectures, viii. 456.

Simple was the faith of those early days : and in the acceptance of the three creeds, the acknowledgment of only two sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord,—the former, in their view, being accompanied by regeneration,—in the assertion of the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, in the leading doctrines, too, which they professed, and in the system of Church government which they maintained, we perceive the

LECTURE identity of our own Anglo-Saxon Church with that of primitive and apostolic times.

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Soames, ut
supra.

The subsequent corruptions of Rome, such as transubstantiation, image-worship, the invocation of saints, the veneration of relics, purgatory, half communion, and the like, found no place in the religious tenets of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers.

For four centuries and a half, the incubus of papal supremacy rested upon the English Church; and, though Wiclif and others had warmly protested against some of the worst corruptions of popery, it was not until the land began effectually to feel the blessings of a respite from the miseries of civil war and discord, that men had leisure to turn their attention to the nicer questions of theology;—not until they were blessed with a time of comparative tranquillity, that they sought to give a reason for the hope that was in them, and one by one, first to question, then to disbelieve, and finally to reject the tares that had grown up with the wheat; the additions, that is, which ages of craft and ignorance had made to the “faith once delivered to the saints.”

The aim, then, of the Reformers of the Church of England, the Cranmers, the Riddleys, the Latimers of those days, was not to separate themselves from the body of the Catholic Church of Christ, but to cast off an unauthorized assumption of supremacy on the part of a section of the Church; and to repudiate, at the same time, its corruptions and traditions. They made no attempt, as the Romanists assert, to establish a new Church upon the ruins of the old: all that they did was, to purge the old of its abuses, and to weed the neglected vineyard of the Lord. They put forth no novelties of doctrine, but they rejected the novelties of Rome; they advanced no new-fangled opinions of their own, but resorted to the Bible, and deferred to the voice of Catholic antiquity: and, by the patient study of each, they were enabled to revert, both in principle and practice, to the simple faith of the Apostolic Church. The zeal of reformation was not, as far as they were concerned, confounded with the thirst of destruction; and they did not reject any good old custom, which was endeared to them as part of the usages of the primitive

Church, merely because it had been used, or possibly even abused, by Rome. LECTURE
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The Reformation, then, in England was no separation from the Church of Rome ; for, though we were centuries in communion with her, though we owed affection to her for favours past, we owed her no real allegiance.

It was the result of a national resolve to ask for the old paths, for they found no rest for their souls in the way in which they had been compelled to tread ; a national resolve so sturdy, that, when the Reformation was once settled and the purity of faith restored, only eighty of the parochial clergy of the Church of England were found so wedded to their old superstitions, as to refuse to conform to the re-established doctrines and usages of the primitive Church.

Strype's
Annals, c. 12.
See also
Fuller's
Church
Hist. an.
1559.

Thus our faith is no novelty, born and cradled in the days of the Reformation ; for it is founded upon that Bible, which had been too long forgotten. "The Church remained the same after it was reformed, as it was before ; just as a man remains the same man after he has washed his face, as he was before : just as Naaman, the leper, remained the same Naaman after he was cured of his leprosy, as he was before. And so regularly, so canonically, was the Reformation conducted, that even those, who thought no reformation requisite, still remained for a time in the Church ; they did not consider what was done (though they did not approve of it) sufficient to drive them into a schism.

"It was not till the twelfth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, that, listening to the exhortations of the Pope, they quitted the Church and formed a new sect, from which the present Romish dissenters have descended, and in which were retained all those errors in opinion and practice, all that rubbish, which the Catholic Church in England had at the Reformation corrected and swept away."

Hook's
"Hear the
Church,"
p. 12.

The Reformers could not have been more temperate. So careful, too, were they to avoid any unnecessary alterations in the customary form of worship, that they were satisfied with rejecting what was unscriptural, retaining, the while, in the Liturgy those prayers, which had been handed down to them from the earliest ages of the Church,—prayers sanctioned by an Ambrose, a Chrysostom, a Basil, and many

LECTURE a departed worthy. However, with regard to public worship,
 { XXIX. } in one important respect they differed, as a Church, from Rome. Whereas, in all their services, the Romanists retained the Latin language,—considering it to be the ecclesiastical language of the world,—our reformers acted upon what they conceived to be the true, nay the only meaning of the Apostle's counsels; and, in composing our entire Liturgy in English, they took up the literal sense of his declaration,—“In the Church, I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”

1 Cor. xiv.
 19.

Thus, then, we have endeavoured to shew, that our Church in England is not schismatical,—since it existed, as a genuine and independent branch of the Catholic Church of Christ, long before the corruptions and usurped authority of Rome;—a Church lawfully constituted, in that she can trace the succession of her ministers, through the Apostles, to Christ Himself^a;—a Church willing to be tried by the sound test of

^a To enter largely into the question of the Apostolical succession, would demand the space of a separate treatise; and would far exceed the limits of a note or paragraph.

Some doubts have been lately entertained by learned and candid writers, whether this succession “has been uniformly maintained pure and uninterrupted; no single link in the chain defective, which would make the chain no longer one.” Hawkins’s Sermon on the Ap. Success. p. 9, and note. It would seem that no such doubts existed at the period of the Reformation. “It was, at that time, as it had been for one thousand five hundred years, taken for granted, that no man might presume to minister in sacred things, unless he were first appointed to the office by persons having authority to make the appointment by their REGULAR SUCCESSION FROM THE APOSTLES.” Hook’s Call to Union, p. 26. See also Cranmer’s Sermon on the Apost. Success. quoted in the notes to the above work. “The Bishops,” says Mr. Palmer in his *Origines Liturgicæ*, “who rule the Churches of these realms, were validly ordained by others, who, by means of an unbroken spiritual descent of ordinations, derived their mission from the Apostles, and from our Lord. This continual descent is evident to any one who chooses to investigate it. Let him read the catalogues of our bishops ascending up to the most remote period. Our ordinations descend in a direct unbroken line from Peter and Paul, the Apostles of the circumcision and the Gentiles. These great Apostles successively ordained Linus, Cletus, and Clement, Bishops of Rome; and the Apostolical line of Succession was regularly continued from them to Celestine, Gregory, and Vitalianus, who ordained Patrick Bishop for the Irish, and Augustine and Theodore for the English. And from those times an uninterrupted series of valid ordinations have carried down the apostolical succession in our churches, even to the present day. There is not a bishop, priest, or deacon amongst us, who cannot, if he pleases, trace his own

Scripture, and to be judged by the voice of primitive anti-
 quity; a Church, which imposes no fetters upon the con-
 science, but such as Scripture itself imposes; and which ex-
 pressly forbids her ministers, to teach any thing as necessary
 to salvation, which cannot be proved by most certain warrant
 of Holy Writ.

Art. vi.

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XXIX.

spiritual descent from St. Peter and St. Paul." Palmer's Orig. Liturg. c. xii. s. i. p. 249. See also Bishop Jebb's Pastoral Instructions, Disc. i. Van Mildert's Bampton Lectures, viii. H. J. Rose on the Commission and Duties of the Clergy, Sermon. ii.

Recollecting the exceeding care that was taken by the Primitive Church, that the ordination of the bishops should not be "done in a corner" (see Apost. Can. i.), it seems very unlikely that there should have been *any* invalid episcopal ordination:—and it certainly seems strange, that any ordained priest of the Church of England should *seek* to lower his high office, by suggesting doubts as to the reality and soundness of that link, which binds him, in a mystical tie, to the Apostles themselves, and so upward to the Saviour.

LECTURE XXX.

2 JOHN 9.

“He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”

LECTURE
XXX.
Lect. xxix.
p. 342.

UPON the principles adverted to in the last Lecture, the Church of England has laid down in her formularies a standard of orthodoxy, by which she is content to be estimated and judged. And the investigation of this point will shew, first, how far she is really justified in assuming the title of a legitimate branch of the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church; and secondly, what claim she possesses to the affections and obedience of those, who are baptized into her communion; for over none beside does she affect any jurisdiction. Closely, and indeed inseparably, connected with these considerations is the question, how far deliberate dissent from a Church, so constituted, is justifiable in the sight of man, or excusable, as far as we can see, in the sight of God.

Art. xix.

Her definition of a Church is this. “The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.” It is clear, then, that our reformers considered the essential properties of a Church to be, first, that the pure word of God should be preached; and secondly, that the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance: not keeping out of view those things which are necessary for that due ministration.

With regard to the first point, a reference to the Articles, and Catechism, and Liturgy of the Church of England, can alone give the proof, whether she does or does not command

her ministers to inculcate, and, by parity of reasoning, exhort all her children to believe the pure word of God. LECTURE XXX.

She acknowledges God, as revealed to us in His threefold character of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the Creator of the world, the Redeemer of all mankind, the Sanctifier of all the elect people of God. She considers the corruption of our nature to be such, that, “in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation;” and, without defining its precise limits, she implies, that it is as extensive as is consistent with our capability of renewal. She holds, that the only remedy for this corruption is to be found in the sacrifice offered up by Christ: that through His merits alone, and not for our own works or deservings, we are pardoned, justified, and accepted. From the free offer of salvation, made to the world through Christ, she would exclude none; not presuming to define that which is indefinite, nor to shut that door of mercy against any, which Christ has died to leave open to the world. Forbidding, as she does, any human merit to divide with Christ the great work of redemption, she yet holds, with the Apostle John, that he, that hath the hope of that redemption in him, must needs “purify himself,” even as his Lord is pure; for she declares, that a lively faith may be as evidently known by holiness of life, as the goodness of a tree discerned by its fruits. And yet, remembering that it is written, we are not “sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves,” she refers all our sufficiency, to practise this holiness, to the Spirit of Holiness alone; for she says, that “we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will. In conformity with the belief of the primitive Church she teaches, that the first impulses of the Spirit are imparted to us at our baptism: that then the spark of divine life is kindled within us; then the precious gift of the Holy Ghost is bestowed upon us; that then we are taken out of a state of nature, and placed in one of grace and of salvation. Yet, great as are the blessings that flow from the sacrament of baptism, rightly administered,—and inestimable as are the privileges, with which we are then invested, she warns us, that it is not enough to

Catechism.

Article ix.

Lect. xxvi.
p. 303.

Article xi.

Absolution.

1 John iii. 3.

Article xii.

2 Cor. iii. 5.

Article x.

Article
xxvii.
Office for
Baptism.

LECTURE have received the gift, we must *use* it;—not enough to possess the privileges, we must *exercise* them. She holds, in effect, that it may be with our heavenly as with our earthly inheritance, that each may be forfeited by a neglect of the stipulations inseparable from heirship; and so she bids each one of her baptized children take heed, lest, while he thinketh he standeth, his fall may be at hand: and thus she would have us remember, that the regenerate man, as having still some remains of the old Adam within him, requires constant prayer and watchfulness, in order that he may continue in that state of salvation, in which by baptism he was placed. And recognizing fully the difficulty of this task, of keeping alive the light of life kindled within us,—she exhorts us, in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to keep up a constant communication with the Father of our spirits; there, at each fresh participation in that holy rite, to renew the covenant made between God and ourselves at baptism;—there, spiritually “so to eat the flesh of His dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body; that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us.” For the truth of these doctrines, and for her own reasons in advocating them, she refers her children to the Holy Scriptures, as “containing all things necessary to salvation.” And, whilst she reserves to herself, as “the witness and keeper of Holy Writ,” the “power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of Faith,”—yet she does not so exercise that authority, as to decree, or to “enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation,” either against Scripture, or besides Scripture. But it is urged against her, that she defers to the voice of primitive antiquity. She does so. But how? Not so as to place tradition on the same level with God's word; but to use it for the exposition of that word, where the sense is doubtful, and where the practice of the primitive Church can alone decide the question. Where the writings of the fathers go hand in hand with Scripture, she admits them as authority: where they appear to be at all inconsistent with Scripture, she is only acting upon her own principles in rejecting them. For instruction in matters of Church discipline and ecclesiastical usages, she knows it were in vain to look elsewhere than to

LECTURE
XXX.

Lect. ix.
p 89, 90.

Article ix.

Communion
Service.

Ib.

Article vi.

Article xx.

Ib.

those venerable men; and she defers to their opinions, to guide and regulate her own, upon the same principle as an affectionate child would abide by the counsel of a wise and aged parent, in preference to following the suggestions of his own inexperience. How can she forget, that Rehoboam lost a goodly kingdom,—more than two-thirds of his inheritance,—because he would not listen to the advice of his father's aged and well-proven counsellors, but preferred the more congenial suggestions of the young and the hot-headed? Upon this principle, she has followed “the godly and decent order of the ancient fathers,” and consulted their minds and purpose in her Liturgy and formularies, her rites and ceremonies¹. All that was primitive, she paused before she would presume to reject. All that was exclusively of human invention she tried in the balance of Scripture, before she would venture to adopt. And thus we find her accepting the three Creeds, as the symbols of faith belonging, not to this or that individual church, but to the Catholic Church of Christ: we see her putting forth a form of prayer, for the spiritual comfort of her children, which was not the growth of an hour or a day—not the offspring of one man's wit or talent; but prayers,—many of them handed down to us from apostolic ages, as a rich legacy of the devotion of men whose lips, like the Jewish prophet's, were touched with the live coal from the altar;—the united work of successive generations of the learned, the pious, and the godly of the Church of Christ².

With regard to her government and discipline, we have seen that it accords with that which was instituted by men, each one of whom could say, with the pious modesty of St. Paul, “I think also that I have the Spirit of God.” To each

LECTURE
XXX.

1 Kings xxi.
3—17.

Preface to
the Com-
mon Prayer.

Article viii.

Lect. xxix.
p. 349.

Is. vi. 6, 7.

Lect. xxix.
p. 340.
1 Cor. vii.
40.

¹ On the deference paid by our own Church to the general views of doctrine and discipline entertained by the early Fathers, and on the profit that may be derived from their study, see “Blunt's Introductory Lecture on the early Fathers.” Jeremy Taylor's Works, vol. vi. p. 508. Van Mildert's Bampton Lectures, viii. p. 232. Hooker's Eccl. Polity, b. iv. c. 9. s. 1, and c. 14. s. 4. Soames's Hist. of the Reformation, iii. 28. Hook's “Call to Union,” note b, and Bp. Jebb's Pastoral Instruction, p. 171, and note, p. 336. Practical Theology, vol. i. p. 359, and note. Palmer's Treatise on the Church, vol. i. p. 376. The Preface to the Common Prayer. The Ordination and Communion Services. Articles 24. 29. 34. Canons 30, 31, 32, 33.

² The reader is referred to an interesting and learned note on this subject, in “Blunt's Introductory Lecture on the early Fathers,” p. 16—24.

LECTURE of the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, she has
 XXX. assigned their respective duties ; and in so doing has followed
 the steps of those, to whom her ministers can trace up, as we
 See Lect. have seen, their regular succession. As far as she can guard
 xxix. p. 350. against such an evil, she allows none to take up the holy
 office of the ministry from worldly or interested motives ;
 but, after strict search into their qualifications, reminds them
 of their fearful responsibility,—their grave authority,—their
 own insufficiency,—the sufficiency of God: she enjoins on them
 the necessity of blamelessness of life and conversation,—she
 counsels them of the duty imposed upon them, to be men of
 study, of prayer, of self-denial, of humbleness, of holiness, of
 purity, of forbearance, of love : again and again, in the awful
 name of the Lord Jesus Christ, she warns them, into how
 high a dignity and to how weighty an office and charge they
 are called ; that they are “ messengers, watchmen, and stew-
 ards of the Lord ; to teach and to premonish ; to feed and
 provide for the Lord’s family ; to seek for Christ’s sheep, that
 are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the
 midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through
 Christ for ever.” And if, with all this apostolical care, the
 mere hireling should seek to have the charge of any portion
 of Christ’s spiritual fold,—if, in spite of all these solemn
 warnings, the mere worldly man will enter into the holy office
 of the ministry, for filthy lucre’s sake,—the fault is not in
 the system of the Church, which does her best to prevent
 such a profanation,—but in those who abuse that system, for
 their perishable body’s profit,—yet, assuredly, for their own
 soul’s jeopardy as well. As consistently may we find fault
 with the order of the Jewish priesthood, because a Hophni or
 a Phinehas entered therein,—or cease to venerate the order
 of the Apostles, because a Judas was numbered amongst
 them.

Office for
 the Ordering
 of Priests.

1 Sam. ii.
 12—17.

It remains to see, how far dissent from the Church of England is either expedient or justifiable. Bearing in mind the slight sketch that has already been given of the history of the Church as established in these realms, it will be clear, that it is not only a legitimate branch of Christ’s Holy Catholic Church, but,—more than that,—it must be admitted, that it is the only true branch existing in this country ;

because the only Church modelled after the apostolic form and usages: the only Church, whose ministers are, in the scriptural sense of the word, lawfully called; or who have received their orders and commission, in regular descent through the Apostles, from Christ. To these undoubted claims we must add others, no less powerful. Purity of doctrine, uniformity of discipline, and the possession of a ritual and liturgy, a considerable proportion of which can be traced to the earliest ages of Christianity.

LECTURE
XXX.

See Palmer's
Treat. on the
Ch. of
Christ,
P. ii. c. 2.
s. 11, and
Orig. Liturg.
Intro.

The first point for our consideration is, how far it is "expedient" to separate from the communion of a Church invested with such high spiritual privileges, and authorized to bestow such peculiar blessings upon her children. A leading feature of dissent is the rejection of all human forms, articles, and creeds, as binding upon individuals: and thus, for doctrine, it professes to refer to the Bible, and the Bible only. Supposing this to be the case, it is an apparent, rather than a real individual advantage: because, in the absence of any fixed rule of exposition, Scripture is rendered of private interpretation³; unity of doctrine, even in theory, becomes impossible. As there is no ecclesiastical authority, so there can be no ecclesiastical restriction; each individual minister may, unchecked, indulge in the wildest exuberance of the fancy; may, without any other warning save the distaste of his own flock, preach error instead of truth, advance the most unscriptural positions, inculcate the most extravagant principles, and, from lack of learning, unconsciously teach for doctrines, if not the commandments, at least the inventions of men. Thus then, for the lack of any settled standard, to which all may appeal as to authority, to which all may turn as to a rallying point in matters of difficulty,—there is nothing, humanly speaking, to protect any dissenting community from lapsing into

³ "The Bible," says one, who has laboured well and discoursed eloquently in the cause of Christian truth, "*the Bible, without a human interpreter, is a dead letter. As soon as the reader attaches any meaning to its sentences, he becomes its interpreter. And the real difference between the Church of England and dissent is, not that the latter takes the Bible as a rule of faith more exclusively than the former, but that the Church of England yields that deference to the concurrent voice of antiquity, which dissenters yield to a living human interpreter.*" Dodsworth on the respect due to Catholic Antiquity, p. 11 (note).

LECTURE deism, Socinianism, or worse,—into any latitudinarian fantasy
 XXX. of the hour.

But it may be urged, that the teaching of the Spirit is instruction enough; and that no human learning is needed by the Christian minister, to qualify him to preach the simple truth as it is in Jesus. All this may be true; but, in questions of such deep importance, we are not to look to what God *can* do, but what God has *covenanted* to do. It is a *promise of spiritual* teaching, then, that we must look for: and where, in the Bible, can we find a promise, that the Spirit will guide into all truth any ministers, save those who are lawfully called? It was to the Apostles, in their ministerial capacity, that the promise alluded to was given; it is to the legitimate successors of the Apostles only, that the promise is, of covenant, continued.

Of course, it is not meant to be denied, that God, who can bring good out of evil, may, in His kind providence, overrule for good the agency of the most unlawful teachers: “He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy;” and it is not ours to prescribe the boundaries, within which that mercy may or may not be limited.

Of individual piety there may be much, both amongst dissenting teachers and their hearers; many a true conversion may be the result of their labours; but it is a grave matter for the Christian’s consideration, how far God’s blessing will permanently rest upon their irregular and mistaken ministrations. What then,—it may be said,—and are we not to think for ourselves? are we under so very strong a compulsion to conform to the established Church, as it is called? are we to listen to the counsels, to respect the functions, and to receive the sacraments, at the hands of a minister of the Church of England, in preference to any one else, simply because his ordination happens to be lawful, even though his life should be unholy, and his deportment far from Christian-like? These are two serious questions to be decided by mere human opinion: and therefore, we must endeavour to see if the Scriptures can throw any light upon the subject.

The first position that we would lay down, is this,—that the mind of God is essentially the same, under all dispensations; with Him is “no variableness, neither shadow of

turning:"—and so, we may fairly conclude, that, though He has suffered the names, and in some respects the functions, of His ministering priests to be altered; though that which *was* typical has been exchanged for that which *is* real; though the daily sacrifice, offered up by Aaron, has given way to the eucharistical remembrance of the atonement, offered up by Christ;—God's intent, in establishing the order of the ministry, remains the same.

The proof of this is to be found in Scripture.

In order to shew, in a general sense, that a people of God's election,—receiving His revealed commands, and manifestly invested with certain privileges,—are not permitted to think for themselves, as to whether it is, or is not expedient, to obey those commands, or to avail themselves of those privileges; we need only point to the memorable instance of Israel's resolving to have a king, and to cast off that peculiar form of government under which they so long had lived. They were dissatisfied with the system which God had laid down for them, because it was abused by individuals:—God gave them their desire;—He would not interfere with their free will;—they were permitted to have their own way;—but He condemned their rebellion, and ordained that their sin should be their scourge.

1 Sam. viii.
3—6.

Ib. 7—18.

We must never forget, that, as a Christian people, we are just as much a nation of God's election, as were the Jews of old: like them, we have a form of Church government, laid down for us by the Spirit of God. If, like them, we are resolved to cast it off, because we cannot quite see its excellency,—because it does not accord with our views of what is right,—because it interferes with what we are pleased to call our religious liberty,—because we *think* it savours too much of human details,—or because it is abused by this or that individual;—are we quite sure, that we are guiltless in the sight of God? Are we quite sure, that human passions and prejudices do not interfere now, as strongly as they did of old, and tempt us to believe, that the claims of the Church to our reverence are unauthorized of God, because distasteful to the impatience and caprice of men? Are we quite sure, that a thirst for novelty, a love of independence, and an indisposition to restraint, have nothing to do with the question? If

See Lect.
xxvii. 312.

LECTURE
XXX.
James i. 17.

LECTURE there is but the suspicion, that, in such weighty matters, we
 XXX. may perchance be wrong, it were better to distrust our own judgment; and, instead of acting upon mere impulse, to enquire cautiously, before we pronounce, or act decidedly.

The very principles of dissent must inevitably lead to the introduction of others into the sacred order of the priesthood, besides the regular clergy; for independence of Church ordination will go hand in hand with independence of Church authority. Once more, let the history of the past afford us a warning and instruction for the future. Once more, let us see, what was the mind of God upon this point in times past; remembering the while that, in fundamentals, it cannot well be altered. And surely to us, as a Christian people, it makes an essential difference in the legality of priestly ministrations, whether they are of men, or of God,—whether they are assumed by individual will, or imposed by due authority.

Numb. iii. 7.
 Deut. xviii.
 5.
 Numb. xvi.
 9.

Ib. 3.

Under the Jewish dispensation, we find that the assumption of the office of the priesthood, without a lawful call, was an offence of such magnitude in the sight of God, as to demand, at His hands, no less a punishment than death. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, were Levites,—and therefore set apart from the great body of the Jewish community, “to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them.” They were not content with this privilege: they did not like the supremacy of Moses, and they coveted the priesthood of Aaron. They thought proudly for themselves, instead of deferring meekly to the regulations appointed for them by God; they resolved, though uncalled and unordained, to offer incense unto the Lord: thus covering real rebellion with the specious cloak, of doing God a service. God,—whose dealings with His people were more direct in those days than in ours,—took the matter into His own hands; and left to succeeding generations an awful warning of the danger of rushing unbidden into the sanctuary, and of handling holy things with unlicensed hands. The whole congregation of Israel was bidden to assemble, to witness the Lord’s vindication of His own institutions. Scarcely had Moses finished bearing testimony against the impiety of those, who were resolved to go beyond

the boundaries prescribed to them by the Lord, when “the ground clave asunder that was under them: and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation:”—and the remainder God slew with fire.

LECTURE
XXX.Numb. xvi.
31—35.

Thus we see that, under the first dispensation, God punished with death even those whom He had specially set apart for the service of the temple, because they were desirous to go beyond the limits prescribed to them, and to take up an office, to which they were not called, and therefore to which they had no legal claim: they were smitten for the invasion of rights, which God had confined to another order. And can we suppose, that His mind is so altered with regard to the dignity or the sanctity of the priesthood, that He can look, with a favourable eye, upon the assumption of so holy an office by men, whose call exists only in their own imagination,—or in the wishes of others, as unauthorized as themselves, to call and to ordain?

Under the second dispensation, the mind of God remained the same with regard to this important point. For, who were the first preachers of the Gospel? Not those, who pressed their services on the Saviour, and thought their wishes sufficient warrant for the exercise of their ministerial office;—but the chosen twelve, who were selected by Him who “knew the hearts of all men,”—and the seventy, whom He invested with special authority, for the purpose of preparing men’s minds for the reception of the coming kingdom.

Luke vi. 13.
Acts i. 24.

Luke x. 1.

And when the Holy Ghost was the manifest advocate of the Christian cause, when believers were added daily to the Church, we hear of no self-appointed teachers intermeddling with holy things. The offices of the bishops, the elders, and the deacons, were appointments, not assumptions. And not even the holy Paul himself presumed to act independently of the guidance of the Spirit, nor yet of the authority of the Church. When too the Gospel spread to other lands, when Titus and Timothy were sent, respectively, to Crete and Ephesus, one part of their commission was to search out fit

Acts xvi. 7.
Ib. xv. 2.Tit. i. 5.
1 Tim. v.
21, 22.

LECTURE men, and, after due examination, to ordain them for the services of the altar.

See Burton's
Lect. on
Eccl. Hist.
xii. p. 357,
358.

Ad. Polycarp.
c. vi.
Ephes. c. iv.
v.
Magnes.
c. iii. iv.
Trall.
c. ii. iii.
Smyrn.
c. viii. ix.
Philadelph.
c. vii.
Magnes.
c. vi. vii.
Trall. c. iii.

If we turn to the records of the early Church, we shall find the immediate successors of the Apostles saying and practising the self-same thing. The writings of Ignatius, a venerable father of the Church, who was contemporary with the Apostles, and who had certainly received more than the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit, are full of the most decided testimony to the divine institution of Church government, as we have it now,—and of the most affectionate exhortations to obedience to ecclesiastical authority, as being not of men, but of God. At one time he speaks of obedience to God, as going hand in hand with subjection to the discipline of the Church. At another, he exhorts his readers to obey their bishop, as they would the Lord Jesus Christ, and to do nothing without his sanction⁴. He looks upon the priests as the assembly of God, and as the synod of the Apostles, without which, he argues, “a Church is not properly called a Church.” Ignatius, we must remember, spoke the belief of his own day, when the extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost were even yet in force. Still stronger is the language of the learned Cyprian: “There are those,” he says, “who with no appointment from God, take upon them, of their own will, to preside over their venturesome companions, establish themselves as rulers, without any lawful right of ordination, and assume the name of bishop, though no man gives them a bishoprick. . . . These same persons the Lord designs and signifies, saying, ‘They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and hewed them out broken cisterns that can hold no water.’ While there can be no baptism save one only, they think that they can baptize. They forsake the foun-

⁴ It is impossible to read the Epistles of Ignatius, without being struck with the earnestness with which he impresses upon his readers the necessity, not the mere decency, of cheerful unhesitating obedience to the judgment and authority of the bishop. In the simple days of the primitive Church, the clergy appear to have taken no steps, even of minor moment, without his privy and sanction; and the rule, laid down by the martyr of whom we are speaking, was scrupulously adhered to by all, who would fain have themselves considered dutiful children of the Church: *χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μηδὲν ποιεῖτε*. Ignat. ad Philadelph. c. 7. No ecclesiastic, in those times, ventured to do that which was right in his own eyes only, much less to act independently of the rules of that Church, of which he was a voluntarily ordained priest.

tain of life, yet promise the gift of a vital and saving water. LECTURE
XXX.
Men are not cleansed by them, but rather made foul; nor their sins purged away, but even heaped up; it is a birth that gives children, not to God, but to the devil. Born by a lie, they cannot receive the promises of truth. Gendered of misbelief, they lose the grace of faith. They cannot come to the reward of peace, because they have destroyed the peace of the Lord, in reckless discord.” Cyprian.
Tract. v.
s. 10.

Should any be disposed not to go all lengths with these holy men, in thus exalting the authority of the Church, and the dignity of the priestly office, they should at least pause, before they too hastily reject the doctrines maintained by such men, in such ages; men, who, to say nothing of their spiritual gifts, had, at all events, better opportunities of knowing the mind of the Apostles upon these matters than ourselves. We must remember, too, that these tenets, respecting the necessity of an episcopal form of government to constitute a lawful Church, were not confined to their day; they reached from the times of the Apostles to the days of the reformation: and it is well known, that the great reformers of Germany, Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin, long hesitated before they established any other forms, and deeply deplored the supposed necessity, of departing from the known usages and discipline of the primitive Church.

See Palmer's Ch.
of Christ.
P. i. c. xii.
s. 1—3.

Now “dissenting communities cannot be derived from the Apostles, for they were heard of for the first time in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries after Christ, and were not then peaceably derived from any society of apostolical foundation, nor afterwards acknowledged by any such as a portion of the Church of Christ. In addition to this, it is easy to see that their ministry is not apostolical. They themselves ridicule the notion of any divine commission to minister in sacred things, derived by successive ordinations from the Apostles. The claim of the Church to such a commission for her ministers is matter of unceasing vituperation and scorn with dissenters. Of course, therefore, their own ministers cannot pretend to such a commission. But, after all, it is pretty plain that they are obliged, whether willingly or unwillingly, to adopt this course; for their founders, or some of their first ministers, were generally laymen who usurped

LECTURE the power of the ministry, and pretended to ordain others to
 XXX. an office which they had not themselves received by any im-
 Palmer's position of hands from the ministers of Christ."

Ch. of
 Christ,
 P. i. c. xiii.
 s. 4.

But more than this:—it is notorious that in many sects, not even a peculiar education is considered necessary, to qualify men to act as the pastors of the flock. They are frequently wholly uneducated, untrained, undisciplined; with nothing for their guide but the wild fancies of an over-excited, though, it may be, a devout imagination. Of course no reasonable person would deny, that the dissenters have numbered amongst their ranks several learned and pious men;—men who have been, under God, the means of bringing many a sinner from the depths of spiritual ignorance to a saving knowledge of Christ. We would not speak disparagingly of the labours, nor think lightly of the piety of a Watts, a Henry, or a Doddridge; but the excellency of a few individuals cannot make up for the badness of the whole system.

The dissenter may boast, and justly boast, of such as these, as shining lights amongst their body. They may say, too, that the generality of their pastors are men perfectly qualified for the ministerial office; nay, in some cases, perhaps, more so than many of the national clergy. It may be so; but it has nothing to do with the matter. It is not a question of comparative merit, but of lawful appointment. There might have been, for any thing we can tell, some amongst the Jews, who were as able to teach the people, as the Scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses' seat; but it was not their office. For any thing we can see to the contrary, Barsabas might have been as holy a man as Matthias,—yet he was not elected in the room of Judas, and could not have taken upon him the office of an Apostle, without sinning against the Lord. In human matters it is much the same. It is perfectly possible, for many a traveller in a foreign land to be better fitted for the office of an ambassador, than the individual accredited by the authority of his government; but his words, howsoever wise and weighty, would fall powerless for lack of authority.

Though the liberalism of the present day may be willing to place upon the same level the lawfully and the unlawfully

called ; though men may be desirous to fling down the wall with which God has fenced around His Church ; though they may boast of making no distinction between the apostolically ordained, and the ministers appointed by the mere will of an individual congregation ;—it would be well for the humble Christian to recollect, with St. Paul, “no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron ;” and that even the Saviour of mankind did not take up the priestly office, until His Father had especially called Him for the purpose. “Christ glorified not Himself, to be made an High Priest ; but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee.”

Heb. v. 4.

1b. 5.

Separation from a national Church,—free from all corruption, save that which must ever accompany an institution in which human interests are permitted to be mixed up,—cannot be otherwise than a violation of Christian unity : and is it no sin to violate this unity, which was so near the Saviour’s heart, that it formed, as we have seen, a conspicuous feature in the intercessory prayer offered up to His Father, on the night of His betrayal ?

Lect. xix.
p. 217.

If schism be not hostile to the Spirit of peace, why did the Apostle, who spoke by that Spirit, so unequivocally condemn it ? The Corinthians did not quarrel so much respecting matters of faith, as upon the merits of their respective teachers,—and upon the minor details of ecclesiastical discipline. These were the points upon which they differed ; and thus “they divided Christ :” one was of Paul, another of Apollos, another of Cephas, another, who perhaps prided himself beyond the rest upon his purity of doctrine, and simplicity of discipline, called himself exclusively of Christ. It was not so much his own charge to keep this unity, as that of the Spirit of God, which the Apostle gave, when he said, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.” And, in his second Epistle to the same people, he makes the presence of the Spirit of peace, dependent upon the cultivation of peace amongst themselves. “Be of one mind, live in peace ; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

1 Cor. i. 12.

1b. 10.

2 Cor. xiii.
11.

LECTURE
XXX.Ignat. ad
Trall. c. vii.Cyprian.
Tract. v. 4, 5.
Aug. contr.
Epist. Parmen. ii.
25. al. 12.Id. Epist. 93.
al. 48. c. 26.
al. 9.Calv. Inst.
iv. c. 1.
s. 19.

again, we find the primitive Church recording her precepts, as so many commentaries upon the apostolic writings : “ Remain inseparably united to Jesus Christ, and your Bishop, and the ordinances of the Apostles,” said Ignatius : “ he that is within the altar is pure, but he that is without is not pure : that is, he that doeth any thing without the Bishop and the Presbyters, and the Deacons, is not pure in his conscience.” “ He who holds not the unity of the Church,” says Cyprian, “ does he think that he holds the faith ? ” “ Whosoever parts company with the Church, and joins himself to an adulteress, is estranged from the promises of the Church. He who leaves the Church of Christ, attains not to Christ’s rewards. He is an alien, an outcast, an enemy. He can no longer have God for a Father, who has not the Church for a mother. If any man was able to escape, who remained without the ark of Noah, then will that man escape, who is out of doors beyond the Church. The Lord warns us, and says, ‘ He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who gathereth not with Me, scattereth.’ He who breaks the peace and concord of Christ, sets himself against Christ. He who gathers elsewhere but in the Church, scatters the Church of Christ.” “ There is nothing,” observes St. Augustine, “ more grievous than the sacrilege of schism.” “ We are certain,” says he in another place, “ that no one can justly have separated himself from the communion of all nations.” And even Calvin bare testimony to the same effect; a testimony the more remarkable, when coming from the lips of one, who avowed in theory what worldly policy and the love of independence prevented him from putting into practice. “ Let both these truths remain fixed ; that he who voluntarily deserts the external communion of a Church, where the word of God is preached, and His sacraments administered, is without excuse ; and that the vices of few or many, are no obstacle to prevent us from professing our faith there, by means of the ceremonies instituted by God⁵.”

⁵ For an ample and masterly elucidation of this subject, the reader is referred to Palmer’s Church of Christ, P. i. c. 4. s. 2, “ On voluntary separation from the Church.” He quotes, amongst many other passages, a remarkable one from the writings of the nonconformist Baxter, “ He that is out of the Church, is without the teaching, the holy worship, the prayers, and the discipline of the Church ;

Strange inconsistency this between theory and practice: and yet, it affords an abundant proof, that even he looked upon dissent as unjustifiable, and sinful. LECTURE
XXX.

Such, then, seems to have been the mind of God upon the subject, as far as we are able thus briefly to examine it. Under each dispensation, He seems to have denied to the people of His election the exclusive right of thinking for themselves, whether they will or will not conform to that system, which he has laid for their observance. In each, He has set apart a body of men for the offices of the Church; and in neither has He sanctioned the assumption of those offices by others. From the history of each we may draw the same deduction, "How shall they preach except they be sent?" And from the councils of each we may gather, that, as "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace," so He would have us, as far as is possible, think and "speak the same thing;" not separating from the Church, because we may differ from her upon this or that point, but remembering that it is God's institution, established by His power, and supported by His promise. It is ours, to endeavour to realize upon earth that vision of an united Church, where all Christ's spiritual children may be gathered into "one fold under one shepherd."

Rom. x. 15.
1 Cor. xiv.
33.

Ib. i. 10.

John x. 16.

Whilst thus much has been said respecting the perils of those who leave the Church, their nursing Mother, for the indulgence of their own fancies;—whilst we would fain

and is out of the way where the Spirit doth come, and out of the Society which Christ is especially related to: for He is the Saviour of the body, and if we once leave His hospital, we cannot expect the presence and help of the physician. Nor will He be a pilot to them who forsake His ship, nor a captain to those who separate from His army. Out of this ark there is nothing but a deluge, and no place of rest or safety for a soul." Baxter's "Cure of Church Division."

Strong language for a nonconformist!

In like manner, John Wesley always disavowed any intention of severing himself from the communion of the Church. "Soon after he had taken the memorable step of consecrating Dr. Coke as an American Bishop, he arrogated to himself the same authority for Scotland as for America; and this, he maintained, was not a separation from the Church: 'not from the Church of Scotland,' said he, 'for we were never connected therewith. Not from the Church of England, for this is not concerned in the steps which are taken in Scotland. Whatever, then, is done, either in America or Scotland, is no separation from the Church of England. I have no thought of this. I have many objections against it.'" Southey's Life, c. 29, p. 534.

LECTURE

XXX.

2 Tim. iv. 3.

Litany.

warn the impatient, how they "heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears," and desert their appointed pastors, because, in their estimation, they do not preach the Gospel (or, to speak more correctly, their own private interpretation of the Gospel);—however strongly we may urge, in the arguments and language of the primitive Church, the peril of that sin of schism, from which, as well as "from false doctrine and heresy," we pray to be delivered;—we do not mean to assert, that out of our own communion there is no salvation. Who are we, that we should narrow God's mercies? Yet we dare not say, with the modern liberal, that churches, creeds, sects, parties, and opinions, are all upon the same level; mere human trifles, insignificant in themselves, and indifferent to the great God of heaven and earth:—there is no spirit of republicanism in Christianity. Tenderly, then, as we would judge the consciences of others,—and anxious as we would be, to abstain from dealing out our anathemas against those, who cannot see with our eyes, nor hear with our ears;—the conscientious minister of God's word would not be *so* tender, as to make light of the breach of unity inseparable from dissent,—and he would be as anxious, to avoid keeping in the background the real claims of the Church of England, to the titles of HOLY, CATHOLIC, and APOSTOLIC.

Office for
the Ordering
of Priests.

Acts xx. 27.

God forbid, that the time should ever come, when the ministers of that Church would qualify or disguise the truth (even though it may be somewhat unpalatable), in order that they might avoid the very possibility of offence, and so essay to suit the restless temper of these latter days! Why should we play the part of forsworn teachers, unfaithful to those ordination vows, which bid us "banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's word?" And forsworn is God's minister indeed, if he cannot say, in the language of the Apostle's parting charge to the Ephesian Church, "I have not shunned to declare unto you *all* the counsel of God." Why should we *fear* to assert, that deliberate, wilful separation from a Church pure in doctrine, apostolic in discipline, primitive in practice, *is* a sin in the sight of God, when the Scriptures so unequivocally authorize us to declare as much?

The Christian minister is invested with too awful a responsibility, to know, in the exercise of his office, the very name of fear,—except indeed the fear of God. He is in charge of souls:—why, then, should he be backward in warning those souls, that though, out of the Church, there *may be* spiritual blessings for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness,—yet, that, only within her pale, is a *covenanted title* to those blessings? It is not, that the Church lays a paramount claim to plenary authority over the consciences and the souls of men; but those who are baptized into her communion, she regards as her legitimate children. To them her appeals are made: and, whilst to all she would give the warning, that they pause before they desert, and examine before they condemn her,—to her own children are more especially her counsels directed, that they be not “carried about with every wind of doctrine;” but that they defer to her voice, as putting forth the pure word of God through the instrumentality of ministers, the lawfulness of whose calling is beyond dispute: who refer, for the soundness of their doctrine, to the only source of truth, the Bible; who, for their discipline, appeal to the known practice of the Apostles, and the usages of the primitive Church; and who, for the minor details of their ecclesiastical polity, claim for themselves as a Church the same liberty of regulation, which they freely concede to the remaining orthodox branches of Christ’s Holy Catholic Church ⁶.

Eph. iv. 14.

LECTURE
XXX.

⁶ No apology need be made for quoting Archbishop Bramhall’s answer to the question, “Who are Catholics?”

“Whosoever doth preserve his obedience entire to the Universal Church, and its representative a General Council, and to all his superiors in their due order, so far as by law he is obliged; who holds an internal communion with all Christians, and an external communion so far as he can with a good conscience; who approves no reformation but that which is made by lawful authority, upon sufficient grounds, with due moderation; who derives his Christianity by the uninterrupted line of Apostolical succession; who contents himself with his proper place in the ecclesiastical body; who disbelieves nothing contained in Holy Scripture, and, if he holds any errors unwittingly and unwillingly, doth implicitly renounce them by his fuller and more firm adherence to that infallible rule; who believeth and practiseth all those *credenda* and *agenda*, which the universal Church spread over the face of the earth doth unanimously believe and practise as necessary to salvation, without condemning or censuring others

LECTURE of different judgment from himself in inferior questions, without obtruding his
 { **XXX.** } own opinions upon others as articles of faith ; who is implicitly prepared to believe and do all other speculative and practical truths, when they shall be revealed to him ; and, in sum, ‘ *qui sententiam diversæ opinionis vinculo non præponit unitatis* ’—‘ that prefers not a subtlety or an imaginary truth before the bond of peace ;’—he may securely say, ‘ My name is Christian, my surname is Catholic.’ ”
 “ By the one,” says the archbishop, in the title to the treatise from whence this quotation is taken,—“ by the one, I am known from infidels ; by the other, from heretics and schismatics.” *Just Vindication of the Church of England*, part 1. disc. ii. c. 2. p. 111, 112, ed. 1842.

LECTURE XXXI.

1 JOHN i. 7.

“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.”

THERE appears to be considerable difficulty, in assigning a date to the introduction of the next clause of the Creed, in which the Christian professes his belief in “the Communion,” or fellowship, “of saints.”

LECTURE
XXXI.

The most ancient writing in which we meet with it, is a sermon, commonly, though perhaps falsely, attributed to St. Augustine. The learned Lord Chancellor King considers its introduction, to have been owing to a desire to check the opinions of the Donatists, who violated the unity of the Church by assuming to themselves the exclusive right to the title of Catholic, and who refused to hold communion with any of the apostolic Churches; thus violating that affectionate spirit of union, which was so striking a characteristic of the primitive branches of the Catholic Church of Christ. “Wherefore, that such schismatical notions and practices, so destructive of Christian charity, and subversive of the unity of the Catholic Church, might be repressed and contradicted, it is most probable, that the ‘Communion of Saints’ was added in the Creed, as an appendix to, or explanation of ‘the holy Catholic Church;’ by which it was intended to declare, that though there be several particular churches, and congregations, throughout the face of the earth,—yet, that there ought to be a communion and correspondence between them, as far as is necessary, possible and convenient; that whatsoever is regularly performed and determined in one, either as to acts of worship or discipline, must be allowed by all others to be valid and good, seeing particular churches are no other

August. de
Temp.
Serm. 123.

LECTURE than so many distinct limbs, members, or parts of the Catholic
 XXXI. and universal one."

King on
 the Creed,
 c. vi. p. 357.

But we may well conclude, that if the clause in question was originally inserted, in order to check the progress of an existing heresy, so it has been subsequently retained by all branches of the Church, to declare and teach a comforting truth.

Col. i. 12.

It was doubtless meant to be asserted, first, that a participation in the common privileges connected with the Christian covenant, is the legitimate heritage of all who are baptized into the faith of Christ; and, secondly, that these privileges are, in a peculiar manner, the absolute possession of those who, by stedfast adherence to the Apostle's high standard of Christian conduct, have become "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

It will remain to enlarge upon these views, with a clear understanding,—that the wise and pious of so many generations would not have concurred, in laying this down as a necessary article of belief, unless they were fully persuaded that it was so.

The first point, then, to ascertain is, what meaning the Scriptures attach to the word "saint," or "holy," as applied to persons. That the writers both of the Old and New Testament used the word in its primary sense, as applicable to persons dedicated, or set apart for God's especial purposes, is clear from the many places in which it refers to classes or bodies of men; all of whom, it were next to impossible to suppose, had that inward sanctification of the heart, which is implied by our modern or more restricted sense of the word. "Thus the children of Israel, though often the greatest part of them were vicious and corrupt, are frequently called in the Old Testament, *an holy people or nation*, because God had chosen them out from the rest of the world, and set them apart for his peculiar people." And so St. Paul addresses his Epistles to the "saints," who are at Ephesus, Philippi, and Colosse, including, in that comprehensive term, not those only who are entitled to be called so in virtue of their personal holiness, but those, who, in virtue of their spiritual privileges, were taken out of the heathen world, and brought to a knowledge of the One true God, and of his Son Jesus Christ.

King, ut sup.
 p. 343.

Eph. i. 1.
 Phil. i. 1.
 Col. i. 2.

In this general sense of the word, all, rightly baptized, are considered as belonging to one great body, the Catholic Church of Christ; and, in virtue of that membership, they are privileged to have access to the Father, through Jesus Christ,—to avail themselves of all the means of grace, to “work out their salvation with fear and trembling.” But it is one thing *to have possession* of these privileges,—another *to use* them, as they who must give account of the talent entrusted to their keeping. All, who are “called to be saints,” have that outward communion, that connexion with the visible Church, which consists in acknowledging the same Lord, in professing the same faith, in receiving the same sacraments, in calling upon the same God and Father of us all. But as “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel,”—as “not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of the Father which is in heaven,”—so, not every one, who has this outward communion of spiritual blessings, possesses also that inward communion, which consists in being one with God, and in the right use of the means of grace. There is a holier and more restricted sense, in which the expression, “communion of saints,” is used; and one, to which the clause in the Creed more especially refers, as a doctrine of comfort, of encouragement, as well as of warning.

LECTURE
XXXI.

Phil. ii. 12.

Rom. i. 7.

Ib. ix. 6.

Matt. vii. 21.

They, then, that have the deepest interest in this doctrine, they who are privileged to derive the greatest comfort from it, are they, who are saints in the secondary, but more important sense of the word,—“men of holiness.”

The leading features of their character have been beautifully portrayed by the learned and pious author of the “Exposition of the Creed.” “Those are truly and properly saints, which are ‘sanctified in Christ Jesus,’ first, in respect of their holy faith, by which they are regenerated,” and purified; and “secondly, in respect of their conversation; for ‘as He which hath called them is holy,’ so are they ‘holy in all manner of conversation.’ . . . Such persons, then, as are called by an holy calling, and not disobedient unto it;—such as are sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God, and by virtue thereof do lead a holy life, ‘perfecting holiness in the fear of God;’ such persons, I say, are really and truly saints; and being of

1 Cor. i. 2.

See 1 Pet. i.
15.

2 Cor. vii. 1.

LECTURE the Church of Christ (as all such now must of necessity be),
 XXXI. are the proper subject of this article, the 'communion of
 Pearson on saints.'"

Pearson on
 the Creed,
 in loc.
 p. 592.

Dent. xxxiii.
 2, 3.
 1 Sam. ii. 9.

Ps. xvi. 3. 5.

Ib. xxxvii.
 28.

Ib. xcvii. 10.
 Prov. ii. 8.

Ps. lxxxix.
 5, 7.

Ps. xcvii. 10.
 Dan. vii.

18. 22. 27.
 Zech. xiv.

5—9.
 See Lect.

xxiii.
 p. 268—271.

The holy Scriptures are full of declarations, that the saints of God are the privileged possessors of blessings beyond the ordinary run of mortals. They tell us, amongst many other gracious declarations, that they have a mysterious communion with God, and, whether alive or dead, rejoice in the consciousness of His presence: they declare, that God will "keep their feet," whilst "the wicked shall be silent in darkness;" that God's "delight" is in the "saints" and "excellent of the earth," and that He is "the portion of their inheritance;" that He "forsaketh them not," but that "they are preserved for ever;" that, in their congregation, "the very heavens shall praise" God's "faithfulness," whilst "in their assembly He is greatly to be feared;" that "He preserveth their souls," and "delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked." It is their's, too, to witness, and to partake in the triumph of God over His enemies,—their's, hereafter, to be sharers in the prophesied mercies of Christ's spiritual kingdom.

"Under the law of the New Testament, the prospect of this communion is blessedly cleared, and the promise respecting it abundantly confirmed. St. Paul, when he treats on the theme before us, throws the full light of Gospel truth upon the fainter intimations of the former covenant: he proclaims, that Christ shall judge the world with and by His glorified saints: he pronounces the disciples of Christ on earth, members of the household of God, and fellow-citizens with the saints in heaven: he describes the whole family of faith, in heaven and earth, as one; and for the members of this family here below he prays, that they may be gifted with love, with knowledge, with enjoyment, answering to the enjoyment, the knowledge, and the love, partaken of in full measure by their brethren in heaven: even that they 'may be able to comprehend with *all saints*, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fulness of God:' he invites us to give thanks unto the Father, for 'that He hath made us meet to be' (even in this present life) 'partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.'

Eph. iii.
 18, 19.

Col. i. 12.

Now, with prophetic anticipation, he proclaims 'the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints:' again, he testifies, that Christ's faithful servants are already come 'unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.'

LECTURE
XXXI.
1 Thess. iii.
13.

Heb. xii.
22, 23.

"The Apostle Jude carries back to the earliest time the doctrine of a communion of saints, and awfully connects the joint testimony of law and gospel with a primitive and patriarchal revelation. 'And Enoch also,' saith he, 'the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold the Lord cometh, with ten thousand' of His saints, to execute judgment upon all.' But, for the beloved disciple and evangelist it was reserved, to present the doctrine under a more glorious aspect still;—to place it before us arrayed, not in the terrors of judgment, but in the brightness of God's presence, and the everlasting blessedness of the invisible world. 'And another angel came, and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it, *with the prayers of all saints*, upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand ¹."

Jude 14, 15.

Rev. viii.
3, 4.

Thus, in each covenant, God's saints appear to be, as it were, the elect of His election; invested, both in this world, in the intermediate state, and in the consummation of all things, with a peculiar degree of spiritual blessedness and dignity. Nor is their communion, whilst on earth, limited to their intercourse with the Father of their spirits.

Who can have failed to mark that readiness of heavenly affection, with which souls will answer to each other, when they are conscious not alone of the enjoyment of common privileges, but of a kindred appreciation of the value of those privileges. Heart beats to heart, when each is full to over-

¹ For this eloquent description of the privileges and blessedness of God's saints, as revealed in the New Testament, I am indebted to a Sermon, privately printed, by the learned author of the "Apostolical authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews;"—the friend, and biographer, of the illustrious Bishop Jebb.

LECTURE XXXI. flowing with gratitude for the possession of blessings, the reality of which is felt, and the influence of which is no matter of vague surmise, but of positive, practical certainty. There is a holy bond of union between those, who not only worship, but *love* the same Saviour;—not only pray for, but experience the influence of the same Sanctifier: there is a peculiar tie, in feeling that we are members of the same household of faith, one in faith, in hope, in charity; in present sacramental blessings, as pledges of future realized enjoyments.

It is thus that communion with the Godhead begets communion with the whole obedient family of Christ: for, however the saints of God on earth may mix, with a friendly and forbearing spirit, with all professing Christians, there is a holier, a dearer, and more understood tie between them and those who, with them, add to their profession practice, and who make the daily habits of life speak, in no questionable accents, the very language of the heart. Age, sex, climate, are disregarded: nay, those minor differences of opinion are forgotten, which sever the bigot from the bigot, and split the mere professing Christian world into sects, as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore;—all are set on one side, in the glad remembrance of the possession and enjoyment of privileges and blessings, which the world cannot give, and which, when given by God, the world can never take away.

This is indeed a “communion of saints:”—this is,—if we may venture to apply human terms to a subject so removed from human feelings,—the freemasonry of religion. But are we to conclude, that this mysterious sympathy, this devout affection, ends with our life; and, full as it is on earth with immortal longings, is no partaker of that enduring principle of life, which survives throughout eternity? Not so:—the link that binds souls together in the bonds of holiness, though it may be lengthened to an imperceptible degree, is not dissolved by death. There is a communion of saints beyond the grave: nor is the Scripture silent, either as to the existence, or the nature of that communion. It is one of expectation, of sympathy, and of prayer. How touchingly does the divine St. John describe the anxiety of the mystical Church in heaven, for the welfare of the visible, suffering, militant Church on earth! He describes “the souls of them that were

slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held," crying with a loud voice, and saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" He speaks too, as we have already noticed, of the angel offering the "prayers of all saints upon the golden altar" which is before God's throne; and he tells us, withal, that those prayers "ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." Of what nature are these prayers? Let the answer be given in the words of one, who, whilst on earth, to the simplicity of the saint added the endurance of the martyr,—one who suffered much, though not unto death, for conscience sake.

LECTURE
XXXI.

Rev. vi. 9,
10.

p. 375.

Rev. viii.
3, 4.

"I believe, O most holy Jesu," is the devout language of Bishop Ken, "that Thy saints here below have communion with Thy saints above; they praying for us in heaven, we here on earth celebrating their memorials, rejoicing at their bliss, giving Thee thanks for their labours of love, and imitating their examples."

Ken's Prac-
tice of
Divine
Love, in loc.

It is a belief full of comfort, then, to suppose, that death has not broken the tie of affectionate interest in those we love; nor lessened, in reality, that glad communion of heart and spirit, which once existed upon earth; but that we may be permitted to indulge the hope, that they too of our kindred form a part of that spiritual cloud of witnesses, who, as St. Paul would seem to say, survey how we run the race that is set before us.

Heb. xii. 1.

Whenever, then, our own memory turns fondly back to those dear ones who have gone before us, and departed, as we believe, in the full faith of Christ,—if thus we may be allowed to look upon them, as not only still interested in our weal or woe, but even offering up their prayers in our behalf,—whilst we bless God's holy name for all His servants departed this life in his faith and fear, well may we beseech Him to give us "grace, so to follow their good example, that with them we may be partakers of His heavenly kingdom." And that this is the right use to make of this doctrine, our Church bears ample testimony. She forbids us to invoke the saints, or to implore their prayers; (for thus, with the Church of Rome, we should divide with the Saviour that mighty work of advocacy and intercession, which He alone can rightly

Prayer for
the Church
Militant.

LECTURE exercise ;) but she does not forbid us to believe, with St. John, XXXI. that their prayers arise for us unasked ; and that the same sympathies, which they had on earth, have followed them beyond the grave, and will remain, until God shall have accomplished the number of His elect, and established His everlasting kingdom,—until their present state of expectation shall be exchanged for “that perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul,” which awaits all “who are departed in the true faith” of God’s holy name.

Burial
Service.

See Lect.
xx. p. 234—
236.

The time has been, beyond all question, when, even in this country, a reverence akin to idolatrous worship was paid to the memory of Christ’s departed saints ; when the graven image, the presumed relic, the pretended miracle, and the open invocation, each and all told the fearful tale, of the readiness with which the perverse ingenuity of man will misuse the holiest doctrine to the most ungodly ends. A reaction has now taken place ; and in our dread of receiving aught which may have, as we think, the stamp of popery upon it, we are in danger, in these days, of running into the opposite extreme,—of mistaking what is primitive for what is popish, and of paying too little reverence to the saints of old, because the Romish Church has paid too much. And, thus, we not unfrequently hear those beautiful services, in which the Church celebrates the memory of the saints, either neglected as out of date, or despised² as proceeding from, and identified with, the exploded superstitions of a less enlightened age. The course which our Church takes in placing before us, from time to time, the example of the departed saints of God, is as far removed from superstition as to their supposed, as it is from indifference as to their real worth.

It is the course of the Apostle Paul.—Wherefore did he bring forward to his suffering countrymen the example of the worthies of Jewish history ? why did he speak of the Abrahams, the Josephs, the Davids, and the Samuels, of old time ? why did he tell of those of his own day, “of whom the world

² It may be well for the modern despisers of “saints’ days” and the services attached to them, to know, that the only persons, who ever objected to them in primitive times, were the fanatical followers of the wild and extravagant Manes. August. contr. Adimant. Manich. c. 16. s. 3. and contr. Faust. Manich. L. xx. c. 21.

was not worthy,"—of those, who were "tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection?"

LECTURE
XXXI.

Heb. xi. 38.
Ib. 35.

It was, that they, to whom he spake, might strive to have a kindred zeal for the holy cause of truth, and so might be privileged to hold spiritual communion with the departed. It was, that they might emulate their faith, that they might remember by whom they were on every side encompassed, and so might "lay aside every weight," and "the sin which" did "so easily beset them," and "run with patience the race that was set before" them. It is with the same view, that our Church has appointed special days for the commemoration of the saints of God : and she follows the steps of the Apostles, in placing before us, her children, the prominent features in the character of the godly of by-gone days, not for our admiration only, but for our stedfast and prayerful imitation³.

Heb. xii. 1.

If,—to select a few instances from the services of the Church,—if she has set apart a day for the honour of the first martyr Stephen, it is, "that in all our sufferings here on earth," we may, like him, "stedfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed;" and that, "being filled with the Holy Ghost, we may learn to love and bless our persecutors," by following his example.

In reminding us, that St. Andrew "readily obeyed" the call of Jesus Christ, and "followed Him without delay;" she bids us pray, "that we, being called by God's holy word, may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil His holy commandments."

When she speaks of the Apostle Paul's conversion, we are charged to beseech God to grant, "that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may shew forth our thankfulness to God for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught."

The commemoration of the blessed Virgin's Purification,

³ How eloquently has the incomparable Hooker spoken of these days of glad remembrance. "They," says he, "are the splendour and outward dignity of our religion, forcible witnesses of ancient truth, provocations to the exercise of all piety, shadows of our endless felicity in heaven, on earth everlasting records and memorials, wherein they which cannot be drawn to hearken unto that we teach, may, only by looking upon that we do, in a manner read whatsoever we believe." *Eecl. Polity*, v. 71. s. 11.

LECTURE and the presentation of Christ in the Temple, reminds us of
 XXXI. the necessity of our being presented to God like Him, "with pure and clean hearts."

Whilst we speak of the election of St. Matthias into the place of the traitor Judas, we offer up our petition for the purity of the Church, that she, "being alway preserved from false Apostles, may be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors."

And, as St. Bartholomew had "grace truly to believe and to preach God's word," so we are taught to pray, that God may even now grant unto His Church, "to love that word which He believed, and both to preach and receive the same."

In each one of her services for these commemorative days, is some important lesson inculcated. At one time it is faith; at another hope; at another charity; at another repentance; at another perseverance: and when we are called upon, towards the close of the ecclesiastical year, to commemorate that "great multitude, which no man can number," the saints
 Rev. vii. 9. "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," which stand before the throne, and sing their hymn of triumph to their Lord, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb,"—how full of comfort and instruction are the counsels of our venerable mother the Church! Little indeed can that heart hold communion with the saints in heaven, or on earth, which does not then feel itself impelled to say, with her deep devotional feeling, "O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord; grant us grace so to follow Thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which Thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Ib. 10. Amen."
 Col. All-Saints' Day.

And thus is this mysterious doctrine rendered, not a mere speculative truth, but one essentially and practically useful, as an incentive to godliness and Christian perseverance: one, that speaks to us of the necessity of becoming saints on earth, before we can hope to be gathered into the blessed company of saints in heaven. It tells us, that there must be

a communion with them, with God, and with His angels here, LECTURE
XXXI.
 —before we shall be permitted to have intercourse with any
 hereafter. It warns us, that our hopes, and prayers, and
 affections must be, like their's,—to Godward; our's too must
 be the faith, which, while it rests implicitly upon all the pro-
 mises of God, does not forget that there are threats as well.
 Our's must be the well-founded hope, that for us, even as
 for the holy saint of Tarsus, is laid up “a crown of righteous-
 ness;” and not for us only, but “for all them also that love
 His appearing:” and our's the charity, which “beareth all 2 Tim. iv. 8.
 things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all 1 Cor. xiii.
7.
 things.”

LECTURE XXXII.

ACTS xiii. 38, 39.

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

LECTURE XXXII. **ALTHOUGH** the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, was a doctrine inseparable from the very mention of that holy name,—although a belief in its truth was coeval with the first preaching of the Apostles, and so, handed down throughout all succeeding ages,—it was not until the time of Cyprian, that it was thought necessary to incorporate into the Creed a formal profession of this belief.

Ep. 76.

At that time a dangerous heresy was put forth, narrowing the divine mercies in Christ Jesus, under the pretence of vindicating God's honour, by making a distinction between the degrees of guilt, and by denying the grant of repentance and forgiveness to such, as fell into sin after baptism.

Clem. Alex.
Strom.
L. iv. 24.
Hieron.
ad Marcell.
adv. Montan.
Epist. liv.
Hieron.
Lib. ii. adv.
Jovin.
King on the
Creed, c. vii.
p. 380.
Epiphan.
contra
Catharos.
Hær. lix.
1, 2.
King, ut sup.
p. 381.

“The Basilidians affirmed, that ‘not all sins, but only involuntary ones, and sins of ignorance, should be pardoned.’ The Montanists ‘denied the pardon of God, or at least of the Church, to all scandalous and heinous sinners.’” The Novatians, again, “maintained, that ‘there was no mercy for him who should fall after baptism ;’ that is, either that God would not pardon those who should scandalously sin after they were baptized ; or rather, that the Church could not forgive them, and receive them into communion again, but must for ever exclude them from her society, and leave them to the judgment of God hereafter.”

“The natural consequences of this heresy,” continues Lord King, “being so dishonourable to God, so prejudicial to the Church, so contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and so destructive to the souls of men, it is no wonder, that at the first

broaching thereof by Montanus, or at least, at the revival of it with greater vigour and success by Novatian, the fathers of the Church ordained, that 'the forgiveness of sins should be constantly repeated in the Creed at baptism; to declare thereby, that not only sins committed before baptism were then pardoned to the duly qualified and disposed, but that also all sins perpetrated after baptism, even the most scandalous and notorious, (the irremissible one against the Holy Ghost still excepted,) were pardonable and remissible, upon the renewal of repentance and faith, both by God and the Church."

LECTURE
XXXII.
Hieron. ad
Marcell.
Epist. 54.
August.
Tom. iii.
Enchirid.
ad Laurent.
c. 65.
Serm. de
Temp. 181.
de Agone
Christiano,
c. 31.
King, ut
sup. p. 384.

The Church of England holds this same orthodoxy of faith with the ancient Fathers. We, as they, do not presume to make that forgiveness of sins exclusive, which God has promised "to all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel." We, as they, consider the mind of Christ, in this respect, to be sufficiently developed by His own command, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, among all nations;" and by the declaration of the Spirit, through the mouth of His holy prophet,—that, "when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."

Absolution.
Luke xxiv.
47.
Ezek. xviii.
27.

And amply are these views borne out by the facts revealed to us in Scripture. Under His earlier dispensations, God displayed His readiness to forgive even the most heinous offences,—proceeding, as they did in some instances, from those, whose previous knowledge of Him, and whose experience of His past bounties, rendered their disobedience still more flagrant. The pardon of rebellion in the case of our first parents,—of idolatry in that of Aaron,—of adultery and murder in that of David,—will afford a lasting proof, that, though He will by no means "clear the guilty," He is as little desirous that they should die in unrepented sin. Instances like these fully bear out God's declaration of Himself, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth:" whilst his continued pleadings with, and warnings to, the ungodly, amongst those to whom His dispensations were vouchsafed, is an abundant proof, that His mercy can extend to the forgiveness of the most stout-hearted, provided they do not wilfully and wantonly reject it.

Exod.
xxxiv. 7.
Ezek. xviii.
32.

LECTURE
XXXII.

Under the New Covenant, the scheme of forgiveness of sins, through Jesus Christ, was still more clearly laid down ; its necessity, its certainty, its extent, its fore-ordained mercy, distinctly revealed. And we gather thus much from the general language of Scripture on this head : “ that, whereas every sin is a transgression of the law of God, and upon every transgression there remaineth a guilt upon the person of the transgressor, and that guilt is an obligation to endure eternal punishment ; so that all men being concluded under sin, they were all obliged to suffer the miseries of eternal death ; it pleased God to give His Son, and His Son to give Himself, to be a surety for this debt, and to release us from these bonds ; and because without shedding of blood there is no remission, He gave His life a sacrifice for sin, He laid it down as a ransom, even His precious blood, as a price, by way of compensation and satisfaction to the will and justice of God ; by which propitiation, God, who was by our sins offended, became reconciled,—and being so, took off our obligation to eternal punishment, which is the guilt of our sins,—and appointed in the Church of Christ the sacrament of baptism for the first remission, and repentance for the constant forgiveness of all following trespasses.”

Pearson on
the Creed,
vol. i. p. 624.

Free, then, and full as is this remission of sins, and completely as Christ has taken upon Himself the otherwise impossible task, of rendering us pure and spotless in the eyes of God ;—it would perhaps, at first sight, appear somewhat to derogate from the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, were we to attach any conditions to this forgiveness,—for, in that case, it might be argued, it would cease to be, as it is described in

Rom. v. 18. Scripture, a free gift.

But these are matters too seriously influential upon our dearest and most abiding interests, to be decided by human rules : our business is with Scriptural facts. There *are* conditions attached to this forgiveness, which arise from the very necessity of the case ;—nay, from the very existence of man's free will. How can it be otherwise with regard to the free offer of salvation, which pre-supposes a power in man to accept, or to reject it, according as he likes, or dislikes, the conditions ?

In fact, a *covenant* between God and man, without condi-

tions, is as much a contradiction in terms, as any compact between man and man without them. Nor does it in the slightest degree detract from the freeness of the gift, or from the omnipotence of the Giver, when we bear in mind, that the conditions are identified as much with our present happiness, as with God's eternal honour. The chief of them is holiness of life. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." And this holiness must be the result of a firm faith, that "Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

LECTURE
XXXII.

1 John ii. 6.
See Lect.
xii. p. 129.
Art. xviii.
See Bp. Bull
on Justif.
Diss. ii.
c. 18. s. 8.
Ignat. ad.
Smyrn. 6.

Every where is the Christian disciple regarded as a man of a peculiar mind,—of a distinct character,—as one, who has striven to avail himself of Gospel privileges, knowing full well their intimate connexion with Gospel obligations. At one time he is addressed as one, who is not his own, but "bought with a price;" at another, he is called "partaker of Christ;"—and stirring indeed is the description, which St. Peter gives of the titles and privileges of the Christian: "Ye," says the holy man, "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation,—a peculiar people;"—expressions, all of them, which, if they mean any thing, mean to say, that the Christian must be a marked man; one, who has been received "into the congregation of Christ's flock; and signed with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end."

1 Cor. vi. 20.
Heb. iii. 14.

1 Pet. ii. 9.

Office for
Baptism.

And this peculiar cast of character is not recommended to the Christian for his adoption, only on the score of expediency, decency, or gratitude,—but on that of necessity. It is urged upon him, in some sort, as a test, whereby he may ascertain the individual interest he has in that remission of sins, which was purchased for the world by the blood of Christ. "If any man be in Christ,"—if, that is, he continues in a state of covenant with Him,—"he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." The old sins,—the old propensities,—the old sentence,—all are done away: and, in their stead, he is not only

2 Cor. v. 17.

LECTURE XXXII. invested with new hopes and prospects, but he is bound to adopt a new principle of action. "Christ did not die for us, *to bring us unto God still in the state of sinners.* He died to deliver us from sin; and to bring us unto God. But these two points do not stand close together; they are not joined one to the other with an immediate union. They are, as we may say, two ends of a great chain; and other links must come between to make it perfect. Christ hath made us fit to be once more partakers of the heavenly glory by and by; but then—there is the likeness of the Divine nature to be formed within us in the mean time. The practice of its graces must begin here on earth; the fruits of it must ripen here, to shew a stock of fitting quality to be transplanted into heaven."

Miller's
Sermons, iii.
p. 61.

Seeing, then, that such and so great is God's mercy towards us, that He sent down His Son to die for us,—to become a curse that we might receive a blessing;—such and so extensive the offer of forgiveness of sins through Him, that, both in the old and new covenant, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them:"—it remains to ascertain, whether there is any sin of such a deadly character, as to exclude the transgressor from the kingdom of heaven.

The Scriptures answer in the affirmative: the "sin unto death," of which St. John speaks, and for which he seems to indicate that prayer is unavailing, is manifestly the same as the sin against the Holy Ghost, respecting which our Saviour declares, that it shall not be forgiven a man, "neither in this world, neither in the world to come."—What is this sin?

In that part of the Gospel, in which these fearful words occur, we read, that our blessed Saviour had healed "great multitudes;" and, amongst them, "one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb;" "And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?" They saw the miracles, they felt their benefits, they acknowledged their power, they ascribe them to the right source, the immediate agency of God. Upon this, and upon many other occasions, the bulk of the people argued, as did Nicodemus at an earlier period of our Saviour's ministry,—*"no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."* The Scribes and Pharisees were

Ib. 15.

Ib. 22.

Ib. 23.

John iii. 2.

not so ready to admit the conclusion. They could not gainsay the fact, that "this man doeth many miracles;" they could not deny, that there was an exercise of some supernatural power: but they were loth to confess, "this is the finger of God;" thus being more unwilling to yield to their convictions, than were, in former times, the baffled wizards of the court of Pharaoh. They could not but feel, that,—if they admitted the miracles to have been Jehovah's work,—they could scarcely avoid coming to the same conclusion with the people. But to recognize in the humble prophet of Galilee that Messiah, to whom many a longing eye had been turned for generations, would be to admit, that they who sat in Moses' seat had taught the people false interpretations of the prophecies, which had led both themselves and others to entertain erroneous notions of the character and mission of the Christ. They strove therefore to persuade the people that He was an impostor, a magician, a trafficker with the powers of darkness,—one who cast out devils "by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." Our Saviour, in replying to, and in reproofing their blasphemous objections, spoke to their thoughts, as well as to their words,—"whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

LECTURE
XXXII.
John xi. 47.

Exod. viii.
19.

Matt. xii. 24.

1b. 32.

He made every allowance for the difficulty which the people had, in reconciling His lowly appearance with the national expectations and belief as to the character of their Redeemer:—it was a sin of ignorance,—one that might be repented of,—one that betokened blindness of understanding, rather than obduracy of heart. But to deny the power and agency of God in the miracles before their very eyes,—to assert that the spirit of hell would cast out, defeat, and disgrace his own agents, betrayed so determined an opposition to God's counsels, that it became a sin against light and knowledge, and, too probably, against conviction also. It was a sin which could exist only in those, who, like Pharaoh, had resisted the warnings of the Holy Ghost, and so had done despite unto the Spirit of grace. It could prevail over none, except such as, in consequence of their obduracy, had been

LECTURE XXXII. finally abandoned by the Holy Ghost as irreclaimable:—there could not, in the common order of things, be forgiveness for a sin like this.

If this view of the “sin against the Holy Ghost” be correct, it is clear that *the very same sin* cannot be committed in these days;—for, as the miraculous manifestations of the Spirit have ceased, God has mercifully placed it out of our power to offend against the same evidence, or to stifle the same convictions.

But whilst, for our comfort, we dare say thus much,—whilst we bless God, that the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin;—we must rejoice with trembling,—and confess, that it is very possible to commit a sin so nearly resembling that of the Pharisees of old, as to run the risk, at least, of forfeiting God’s forgiveness.

Their offence consisted in resisting the impulses of the Holy Ghost, who appealed to the evidence of their senses, by signs, and wonders, and all those mighty deeds, which attested His presence in earlier days. Our sin may be, to resist the impulses of the same Spirit, when He appeals to our consciences, by warning, by visitation, and by that still small voice, whose gentlest whispers are to us as God’s unerring oracles. Why should the Apostles warn us, lest we not only “grieve the Spirit” of Grace by our ungodliness,—but, lest we “quench” Him by our unbelief,—if it is not possible to do so? And, if that heavenly Guide be once provoked to leave the tabernacle of our flesh that we have profaned, who shall presume to speak confidently of His return? who will venture to say, that thus, and then, we run no peril, lest, even in this world, the day of our salvation may be past;—and that God may give us over to that reprobation which we have courted?

Let us not deceive ourselves: a long-continued course of sin, with the Spirit’s word before us to warn of its unfailing wages, is as plain a resistance to His pleadings, as ever was that of the Pharisee who fought against the Spirit’s works, which were wrought to tell him of the presence and power of the Godhead. In each case, the evil heart of unbelief is at work,—suggesting, on the one hand, doubts whether God’s word will, after all, be carried into effect to the very letter;—

Eph. iv. 30.
1 Thess.
v. 19.

on the other, bringing forward arguments to support the opinion, that it is not God's but Satan's arm that works the miracles, which the senses cannot but admit are wrought before them. Thus, though, "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,"—let us take heed, lest continued sin weary out even that long-suffering Pleader, and task His forbearance beyond the power of forgiveness:—the power,—for there is a point at which, were mercy shewn, we must suppose the possibility of God's law being broken in favour of the sinner,—whilst we know full surely, that it is kept inviolate for the faithful. Let us not presume upon our greater light, nor boast our more extended privileges, if we use the liberty of the Gospel as a cloke for our unrighteousness:—they will but add to our condemnation,—they will plead trumpet-tongued against us, if they only serve to induce us to continue in sin, in the impious hope that grace may probably, or possibly abound. "He that despised Moses' law," says the Apostle, "died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

LECTURE
XXXII.
1 John ii. 1.
Heb. x. 28,
29.

One important point, connected with the "forgiveness of sins," remains to be noticed: it is, the power assumed by the Church to pronounce absolution from them. "Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" was a scriptural truth, as fully recognized under the law of works, as under the covenant of grace; the Jew, no less than the Christian, thus ascribing to the Most High the exclusive privilege, of pardoning or condemning the transgressions of the sons of men. In what light, then, are we to regard the absolving power, claimed by the Church from a very early period of her history?

It has been already noticed, that when Christ, after His resurrection, solemnly invested the Apostles with their ministerial commission, He gave them, at the same time, a peculiar power,—accompanied by a peculiar promise. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained:" and again, "Lo, I am with

Lect. xxii.
p. 256.
John xx. 23.

LECTURE you alway, *even unto the end of the world*;"—"a promise,"
 XXXII. says Bishop Jebb, "not occasional or temporary, like that
 Matt. xxviii. of miraculous powers: but conveying an assurance, that
 20. Christ Himself will, in spirit and in power, be continually
 present with His Catholic and Apostolic Church; with the
 bishops of that Church, who derive from the Apostles, by un-
 interrupted succession; and with those inferior, but essential
 orders of the Church, which are constituted by the same
 authority, and dedicated to the same service."

Bp. Jebb's
 Pract.
 Theol.
 Disc. vii.
 vol. i.
 p. 122; see
 also Van
 Mildert's
 Bampton
 Lectures,
 viii. p. 221,
 222.

The power of absolution and condemnation, conveyed in
 the words of Christ to the Apostles and their lawful succes-
 sors, may be regarded in two ways; either as judicial, or
 declaratory. That the Apostles limited their exercise of this
 power, in the former sense, to a few rare occasions, a refer-
 ence to their "Acts" and epistolary writings will satisfactorily
 prove; and even then it will not appear, that their sentence
 of condemnation extended beyond the denunciation and in-
 fliction of temporal punishments.

When Ananias and Sapphira fell down dead at the rebuke
 of the Apostle Peter, he passed no sentence upon their souls:
 he left spiritual punishment or forgiveness in the hands of a
 higher power. Blindness, but for a season, was the doom of
 the sorcerer of Cyprus, who had shut his eyes against the truth
 of the Gospel himself, and who strove to make the half-con-
 verted Roman a partaker in his moral blindness. St. Paul
 left the future judgment of his sin to God. And, when the
 same Apostle delivered over the incestuous Corinthian "to
 Satan, for the destruction of the flesh," we are told, that it
 was for the express purpose of rescuing, not condemning the
 soul;—"that the spirit" (in his own words) "may be saved
 in the day of the Lord Jesus." It was a sentence of excom-
 munication from the spiritual privileges of the Church of
 Christ, that the miserable sinner might feel the desolateness
 of being, for a season, without the pale of God's fold, and
 understand the value of the communion, from which he had
 been excluded. It was the exercise of the power given him
 to *retain* sins.—In the next Epistle of the Apostle to the
 same Church, we find that his sentence had worked the de-
 sired effect; for he tells them, that, "in the person of Christ,"
 he forgave the offender. It was the exercise of the power of

Acts v.
 3, 4, 9.

Ib. xiii.
 8—11.

1 Cor. v. 5.

2 Cor. ii. 10.

remitting sins. Again,—when he “delivered unto Satan” LECTURE
XXXII.
Hymenæus and Alexander,—it was with a corrective, not a
condemnatory intent,—“that they may learn not to blas-
pheme.” And, in his Epistle to the Galatians, whilst he 1 Tim. i. 20.
speaks of the power and authority of ecclesiastical censure,
he speaks also of the temper and the spirit in which each
should be exercised. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a
fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit
of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.” Gal. vi. 1.

Thus we see, that even the Apostles, invested as they were
with a peculiar degree of spiritual authority, carefully ab-
stained from any judicial exercise of it, in pronouncing con-
demnation. What they did was done in Christ’s name, as a
solemn protest against sins which He had forbidden. And
with regard to their promises of forgiveness, the whole tenor
of their divine counsels assures us, that never did they pro-
nounce absolution, or preach remission of sins, except in the
name, and under the authority of Christ.

It was in the same spirit, that the primitive Church inter-
preted the commission given by our Saviour to His Apostles,
and through them to their successors. Though they strongly
put forth the truth, that God alone has the power to forgive
sins,—though all questions, referring to eternal rewards and
punishments, were left exclusively to Him,—they claimed, as
a Church, the power of refusing her ordinances and offices to
notorious offenders, and of restoring them to their forfeited
privileges, upon satisfactory proof of their repentance: and
so they exercised their discretion, in “binding and loosing,”
in “retaining and remitting” sins¹. And “in all ages of the
Church,” says Bishop Taylor, “reckoning exclusively from
the days of the Apostles, all the graces of the Gospel, all the
promises of God were conveyed, or consigned, or fully minis-
tered by the sacraments, and by nothing else but what was
in order to them. These were the inlets and doors, by which
all the faithful were admitted into the outer courts of the Lord’s
temple, or into the secrets of the kingdom; and the solemn-
ities themselves were the keys of these doors; and they that

Cyprian de
Laps. Ep.
73. 75.
Tertull. adv.
Marc.
L. iv. c. 10.
Ambros. de
Sp. Sanct.
L. iii. c. 19.
Iren. adv.
Hær.
L. v. c. 17.
Bingham,
b. xix. c. 2.
s. 4.

¹ On the forms of excommunication and absolution in the primitive Church,
see Lord King’s Constitution of the Primitive Church, part i. c. 7. § 9, 10, and
the authorities there cited.

LECTURE had the power of ministration of them, they had the power of
 XXXII. the keys."

Jer. Taylor's
 Doctrine of
 Repentance,
 vol. ix. s. 49.
 p. 256, Ed.
 Heber.

Jer. Taylor,
 ut supra,
 s. 54.
 p. 259.
 See King on
 the Prim.
 Ch. p. i. c. 7.
 § 8.
 Riddle's
 Christian
 Antiq. b. iv.
 c. 4.

"In the primitive Church," according to the same authority, "there was no such thing as a judicial absolution of sins, used in any Liturgy or Church, so far as can appear; but all the absolution of penitents which is recorded, was the mere admitting them to the mysteries and society of the faithful in religious offices, the sum and perfection of which were the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper." And, in most cases, transgressors thus excommunicated, and debarred from all ecclesiastical privileges, had to undergo a long and severe course of penance, as a test of their sincere contrition, before they were re-admitted to the bosom of the Church.

It was by a gradual process, that the priesthood took to themselves a judicial authority of absolving or condemning: an authority never dreamt of, until the Church of Rome, —arrogating to herself the exclusive title of "Catholic," —claimed, with that title, the sole custody of the keys², and established the doctrine, that absolution at the mouth of her priests was judicial, not declaratory. They meant to say, that they had the power of actually conferring remission of sins, and of conveying officially a notification of such remission.

Jer. Taylor,
 ut supra,
 s. 53.
 Concil. Trid.
 sess. xiv.
 can. 9.

This doctrine, unheard of in the Greek Church, and put forth first as a question, rather than as a decision, by Thomas Aquinas, was confirmed in the fourteenth session of the council of Trent.

We now come to the enquiry,—in what sense does our own Church regard this doctrine. She reverts to the practice of the Apostles. She appeals to the known usage of the primitive Church, before worldly feelings had presumed to tamper with God's holiest mysteries, or to usurp His inalienable privileges. All her forms of absolution are founded upon the presumption, of their being addressed to sincere penitents, and, therefore, they are strictly either conditional and declaratory, or optative and precatory. They put forth Christ's

² "The keys," says Archbishop Laud, "were given to St. Peter and the rest, in a figure of the Church, to whose power and for whose use they were given. But there is not one key in all that bunch that can let in St. Peter's successor to a more powerful principality universal, than the successors of the other Apostles had." Conference with Fisher, p. 156, ed. 1839.

promise, not the Church's single judgment; they speak in Christ's name, not in the priest's independent authority.

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As Nathan said to David, (when, conscience-stricken, he bowed before the prophet's stern rebuke,) "The Lord hath put away thy sin,"—so, in the same spirit, does the Church of England say unto her children, that even as God "desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live; and hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins;" so, "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel." But she, resting upon her divine commission, claims to stand in the prophet's place: she, as the delegated instrument of God, "declares and pronounces" to His erring, yet repentant children, pardon and remission of their sins. And she has scriptural authority in saying thus much, and in speaking thus decidedly to the true penitent:—for is it not so written, and must she not declare, that, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins?"

2 Sam.
xii. 13.

Form of
Absolution,
Morn. Pr.

1 John i. 9.

See Chil-
lingworth's
Sermon, on
Luke xix. 8.

Let one of her most gifted sons explain her meaning in this respect. "It is true," says the judicious Hooker, "that our Saviour, by these words, 'whose sins ye remit, they are remitted,' did ordain judges over our sinful souls, give them authority to absolve from sin, and promise to ratify in heaven whatsoever they should do on earth in execution of this their office; to the end that hereby, as well His ministers might take encouragement to do their duty with all faithfulness, as also His people admonition, gladly with all reverence to be ordered by them; both parts knowing that the functions of the one towards the other have His perpetual assistance and approbation. Howbeit, all this with two restraints, which every jurisdiction in the world hath; the one, that the practice thereof proceed in due order; the other, that it do not extend itself beyond due bounds; which bounds or limits have so confined penitential jurisdiction, that although there be given unto it power of remitting sin, yet no such sovereignty of power, that no sin should be pardonable in man without it³."

Hooker's
Eccles. Pol.
b. vi. c. 6.
§ 3.

³ "Our Church," says Dr. Hey, "uses the declaratory form near the begin-

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ning of the service ; the optative, which is in sense precatory, in the communion ; and the indicative in the visitation of the sick. But Bishop Sparrow rightly observes, (*Rationale*, p. 19,) that ‘these several forms, in sense and virtue, are the same,’ and illustrates his observation, by the instance of a prince commissioning an officer to set at liberty all well-disposed prisoners : it seems immaterial which form he uses.”

He observes also, “that though our expression in absolving the sick, ‘I absolve thee from all thy sins,’ sounds as if the absolution were purely indicative ; yet, if we take all the expressions of the form at once into our minds, we must perceive, that the absolution is expressly called ministerial ; and that it is also declarative, and optative ; and therefore, that the concluding expression cannot be rightly understood, but as consistent with those forms to which no member of the Church of England objects.” Hey’s *Div. Lectures*, B. iv. Art. 25. s. 4.

It might be added, that this absolution is not given, until the sick person has professed his stedfast belief in the cardinal points of the Christian faith, as embodied in the Apostles’ Creed ; not until the minister has examined him as to his repentance and charity ; not until the penitent has freely forgiven, from the bottom of his heart, all who have offended him, and sought forgiveness where he has been the offender ; not until he has confessed his sins, and earnestly implored pardon for them. Where, then, is the presumption on the part of the Church of England, in declaring, according to the promises of the Gospel, that the sins of such an one are pardoned through Christ ?

It is also observable that, in the prayer immediately succeeding to the form of absolution in question, its conditional nature is implied by the express declaration, that God only puts away the sins of those “who truly repent.” We pray further, that God may open His eye of mercy upon this absolved penitent, “who most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness.” Upon the supposition, that “he putteth his full trust *only* in God’s mercy,” the prayer is made, that God will not impute unto him his former sins, but strengthen him with His blessed Spirit. The language, then, and the position of this prayer are sufficiently indicative, that the Church of England never intended her ministers to pronounce absolution, except in the name, and under the authority, of Christ.

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ROM. viii. 11.

“He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

FROM the earliest period of the Church's history, the doctrine of the “resurrection of the flesh” appears to have obtained a prominent place in her professions of belief.

The Church of Aquileia, to render mistake impossible as to the precise manner in which the clause was to be interpreted, made use of the expression, “This flesh:” and the Greek and Latin creeds are careful to assert the fact, not of the resurrection of the “body” only, but of the “flesh;” being thus distinct as to terms, inasmuch as there were many who would admit the resurrection of *a* body, but were unable to comprehend, how their own earthly tabernacle could again become the temple of the returning soul.

There were those “who would not grant, that the same body, which now we have, should be raised again; but instead thereof they imagined, that, at the resurrection day, there should be framed by the power of God, thin, subtil, aerial bodies, whereunto human souls shall be joined, instead of those gross, material, fleshly bodies, which they now actuate and inform.”

That our Church follows the judgment of the primitive Church in this respect, is sufficiently evident from the questions upon the Creed put to sponsors at baptism: when it is asked, not merely, “Dost thou believe in the resurrection of the body?”—but, “Dost thou believe in the resurrection of the flesh?”

There seems to have been throughout all ages, and under all dispensations, more or less, a belief in the immortality of

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Pearson, in
loc.
Ruffin. In-
vect. in
Hieron. l. i.
quoted in
Pearson.

King on the
Creed,
p. 398.
Clem. Rom.
Ep. ii. 9.

LECTURE the soul. It was a portion probably of that traditional know-
 XXXIII. ledge which was derived from God's revelation to the sons of Noah, and outlived the superstition with which generations of subsequent idolatry had cumbered it. It was a belief that seems never entirely to have deserted the pagan world, however it might have been openly denied by the profligate, defaced by legend, or obscured by the vain fantasies of man. Amongst the Jews we find, as we might have expected, a more decided belief in the soul's spiritual and undying qualities ; and in a doctrine which must of necessity go hand in hand with that belief, viz. that there will be a future state of rewards and punishments. The almost simultaneous appearance of the two rival sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the one asserting, the other denying the resurrection, will shew, that, for nearly three centuries before our Saviour's time, the minds of the Jews had been so directed to this important subject, as to have rendered it almost a national question. And, as it is well known that the great body of the people sided with the Pharisees, whilst the freethinkers, the libertine, and some few of the wealthier classes adopted the opinions of the Sadducees, we shall be justified in deciding, that, vaguely as the doctrine of the resurrection was put forth in the law and in the prophets, the popular current of belief ran strongly in its favour.

Horne's
Intro.
vol. iii.
P. iii. c. 6.
s. 2.

See Archbp.
Whateley's
Essays, i.
p. 56, 57.

Such as
Job xix. 25.
Ps. xvi. 9.

2 Tim. i. 10.
ἀφθαρσίαν,
"incorruption," as
Wiclif
translates it.

But though some few scattered passages in the Old Testament, when interpreted by that light which Christianity has thrown upon the holy page, would seem to inculcate a belief in the resurrection of the flesh, it was a doctrine, the perfect revelation of which was reserved for Him, "who brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." True, as we have just now seen, that the Pharisees believed in the resurrection : but we must perhaps put a general interpretation upon this belief, and understand them to have looked forward to an eternal state, where God's justice would be vindicated to the soul by a strict retribution for all deeds "done in the body," rather than to an actual reanimation of the body itself. Amongst the Greeks, the more learned regarded the body as the prison of the soul, from which they expected to be released hereafter : and, even after that the preaching of Christianity and the publication of this doctrine had rendered other and

nobler views no longer strange from their very novelty, there were not wanting those, who called the hope of the resurrection of the flesh "the hope of worms; a filthy and abominable thing, which God neither will nor can do." And thus, false teachers in the infant Church at Corinth, adapting their lessons to the popular notions of Greek philosophy, which ridiculed the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, denied it to be a doctrine of the Gospel; affirmed it to be neither desirable nor possible; and argued that the resurrection, promised by Christ, was not one of the flesh, but only of the soul from ignorance and error, which some heretics of those days said was already past. We have the testimony of an early Father of the Church, that there were those in his day, who understood the doctrine of the resurrection in a sense entirely allegorical, and held it "to be no other than our baptismal renovation, wherein we shake off the death of ignorance, and arise, from the grave of the old man, alive unto God."

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XXXIII.Celsus,
apud Orig.
lib. v. s. 14.See Mack-
night, Pref.
to 1 Cor. s. iv.Tertullian
de Resur.
Carnis,
quoted in
King, p. 395.

And the earnestness with which the apostolic Father Clement, the fellow-labourer of St. Paul, urges the retention of the doctrine, seems clearly to indicate that there were those in his time, who were willing, either to explain away their hopes in this respect, or to deny their existence altogether.

Clem. Rom.
Epist. 2.
s. ix.
Ignat. ad
Smyrn. 3.

Whilst such, then, were the vague opinions upon this subject, which even they held, who enjoyed peculiar and ample means of investigating its truth,—we may cease to wonder that, when St. Paul preached at Athens, "he seemed to be a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection:" or that, when the Corinthians were debating upon the question, they should be tempted to ask, "how are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

Acts xvii.
18.

1 Cor. xv. 35.

Many have been the answers to this enquiry; many the debates upon the exact proportion that the risen body will bear to that tabernacle of our flesh, with which we now are clothed. We cannot be very far wrong, if we take up the same line as did the Apostle, in his answer to the question propounded by the Church of Corinth,—using his arguments, and putting forth his illustration, to explain the doctrine.

It was with a prophetic allusion to the necessity of His

LECTURE own death and consequent resurrection, before He could
 XXXIII. enter into His glory as the "first fruits of them that slept,"
 1 Cor. xv. 20. as well as with a reference to the fact, that, to all the faithful,
 death is the necessary precursor of a more glorious state of
 being, that our Saviour said to His disciples, "Verily, verily,
 I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground
 and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much
 John xii. 24. fruit."

And it was upon these words of Christ, that St. Paul appears to have founded his remarkable illustration of the truth of the same doctrine, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. The death and utter corruption of the flesh had been urged by the sceptics of that day, as an argument to prove the impossibility of its resurrection. St. Paul turns their weapons against themselves, and by the very same argument proves, not alone its probability, but its reality.

The Apostle commences his chain of reasoning by laying down, as a foundation, the fact of the resurrection of Christ; which he proves, by appealing to the testimony of credible witnesses who had seen Him after His resurrection, the majority of whom were alive at the time of his writing. Upon the truth of Christ's resurrection is based the certainty of our own,—of that of all men. For it is promised that, as the Spirit of God raised up Jesus from the dead, even so shall He
 Rom. viii. 11.
 1 Cor. vi. 14.
 2 Cor. iv. 14. raise up us also.

This therefore is the Apostle's argument: if the dead are not to be raised, then Christ has passed His word in vain; nay more, Christ is not risen Himself, if we are not to rise again; and it is wrong to look upon Him as the first fruits of them that slept. Then is all the preaching of us, who profess to have been witnesses of these things, vain,—vain is your faith, vain your hopes; then we have borne false testimony to you; then Christ has not died for your sins, but you are still under the curse of the law; then have you no well-grounded joy in present, no sure expectation of things in prospect; then have we bidden you bear up and bear on against all the trials, and sorrows, and temptations of this life, upon a false principle! For, if there be no resurrection to another and a better world, "if in this life only we have
 1 Cor. xv. 19. hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

It is through the hope of a bright crown of rejoicing, to be bestowed on our risen bodies, that we have held as nothing the trials of the flesh, throughout its earthly pilgrimage. Take away this hope, which hath its only foundation in the resurrection of Christ, and why should we abandon friends, fame, fortune, country, kindred,—yea, all that makes life endeared to us?—why should we brave the torments of the persecutor, laugh to scorn the malice of both Jew and Gentile, and welcome death itself, rather than blaspheme the holy name of Jesus, or cease “earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints?” Nay,—we may as well enjoy life, whilst yet we may; eat, drink, and be merry, with the Epicurean, if to-morrow we die, and die to rise no more. Fittingly, then, may we thank God, that we know it to be no matter of dispute, but a well proven fact, that Christ has risen, and so “become the first fruits of them that slept,” —the pledge, that at the last great day, when this world shall have run its appointed course, when all God’s counsels shall be completed, the whole family of the world, from Adam to that hour, shall be summoned from their graves to meet their Judge,—and the sea also shall give up her dead, to stand before the Lord: “and then they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.”

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Jude 3.

1 Cor. xv. 20.

Athan.
Creed.
Rev. xx. 13.
2 Cor. v. 10.
Matt. xvi.
27.
Dan. xii. 2.
Matt. xxv.
34—46.

The simple preaching of this doctrine apparently raised in the Corinthian Church the two questions before alluded to; “How are the dead raised up?” and secondly, “with what body do they come?” The first seemed a thing impossible. “What!” would be their natural enquiry,—“and are we to suppose, that though our bodies, through the lapse of years, may have been so completely resolved into their native dust, as to leave to the human eye no trace of what they were—flesh, nerve, bone, all one undistinguishable mass of corruption,—though our bodies may have been burnt to ashes, separated and scattered to the four winds of heaven, are we still to suppose, that the dispersed or destroyed relics are once more to be united, and that eternally, to the undying soul? How can these things be?” The Apostle answers these doubts and questions, by an appeal to their own experience in the known laws of the vegetable world. God, he implies,

1 Cor. xv. 35.

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has furnished us with a perpetual proof of the certainty of the resurrection of the human body, by suffering us to witness the resurrection of the vegetable body. In each case there is the same necessity: the earth for a season must be the common receptacle of both. Look, is the Apostle's argument, to the seed which you sow,—no matter of what kind,—
 1 Cor. xv. 37. “it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain.” You cast it into the earth, with the perfect knowledge that there it will lie buried for its appointed time; you are aware that it must undergo a certain degree of corruption, before it can come up again; and, in most cases, it appears dead, dissolved, a very portion of the earth to which it is committed: and the knowledge of this fact in no manner lessens your faith as to its springing up again. On the contrary, it is upon this very knowledge that your belief of its doing so is founded.

You are aware that the body of every seed must be buried, before it can arrive at that perfection for which God has destined it. Anon, it breaks forth from the earth, which has so long confined it,—different in form and detail, but exactly the same in substance as when it was committed to the ground, containing then within itself the germ of its future beauty. The little simple seed has become the leaf, the bud, the plant, the flower, all on the same single stem,—all proceeding from the same original:—it is its risen body. If experience tells us that this change from humbleness to beauty, this resurrection of the same body in a more glorious form, does take place annually in the vegetable world; why will not faith whisper to us, that it levies no very heavy tax upon our belief when we are told, that something of the same kind will take place hereafter with regard to our own mortal bodies? “Why should it be thought a thing incredible” with
 Acts xxvi. 8. us, “that God should raise the dead?” If we know that He does so exercise His power with the humble flowers of the
 Matt. vi. 26. field, we know as well, that “we are much better than they.” If God hath raised up them, little is our faith indeed, if we will not believe that much more will He raise up us.

1 Cor. xv. 35. The next question is, “with what body shall we come?” Are we to suppose, that we shall be raised up hereafter with exactly the same limbs, members, functions, powers, as we had when the spirit departed from the body? Nay,—were this

the case, little would be the glory attached to the doctrine of the resurrection, and slender the comfort resulting from its belief. It is mostly a worn-out, helpless, decayed, shrunken thing, this body of ours, when we die: it has done its part; it has worked its appointed task; it has amply sufficed for the purposes for which it was made, as the tabernacle of the soul.

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If this be not the case, if the very idea of a glorious resurrection renders it impossible to suppose, that as the decayed body leaves the earth, so it will rise hereafter,—is any period of our lives to be selected, as that in which our body might be presumed to be most perfect and free from infirmity, most adapted to be the eternal companion of the returning spirit? Nay, even then would it have within it the principle of decay, presuming that to all this period of comparative perfection came.

Besides all this, it is a well-known fact that, during the course of our lives, the individual atoms of our individual bodies are changed and renewed again and again. To say nothing of that which passes within, of which the unscientific know but little,—the most unobservant eye can see, that there is a perpetual change going on without; the skin, the hair, the nails, are constantly undergoing the process of decay and renovation. Year after year, the same thing takes place: nay, limb after limb may be lopped off, and yet, in age, we are conscious of being still the same creatures that we were in youth; although, if we contemplate the same body at the respective ages of four and fourscore years, we may safely say, that, during that long interval, it must have undergone a complete and perfect change.

These were mysteries to the Corinthians, but need not be so to us. Close indeed is the resemblance, that our risen body will bear to this our earthly tabernacle, and yet great will be the difference. It is with ourselves, as with the seed: we commit the dead body to the earth, we consign it to the deep; ages may have to pass away, before the hour appointed for the resurrection of all flesh. In that long period it may have been so perfectly resolved into its native elements, earth may have been so thoroughly blended with earth, ashes with ashes, dust with dust, as to leave to the most curious eye no trace

LECTURE of what it was. It lies for its appointed time; the time, "when
 XXXIII. the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God," when
 John v. 25. the sea shall give up her tenants, and the place of departed
 Rev. xx. 13. spirits shall resign its prisoners. At that moment, the dead
 bodies of the saints of God (whose case alone we are considering now) shall rise again,—but, even as the plant springing forth into its new life, in a far more glorious and perfect form.

"We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." Here our body is adapted, in its functions and capacities, to its several present wants; here we bear the image of the earthy. Our risen body will be adapted likewise to its new wants in heaven, its better and abiding home. "It is sown in corruption,"—in its very natural progress verging to decay,—subject, as Adam's heir, to death and to corruption: "it is raised in incorruption," to waste and die no more. "It is sown in dishonour:"—a body debased by degrading passions and desires; the curse of sin remaining as a taint of disgrace, even to the regenerate; for here, it is a hard matter even to the godly to fight against the prevailing lust, or the besetting sin,—a perpetual struggle to glorify God in the body, and to "purify ourselves even as He is pure:" "it is raised in glory,"—purged from the filthiness of the old Adam,—the image of God effectually rebuilt within it. It "is sown in weakness,"—subject to sickness, and to sorrow,—impotent,—bowed down by infirmity,—paralyzed by disease,—withered by old age,—wearied, too often, by its necessary toil, and unable to exist for long without some relaxation from fatigue: "it is raised in power,"—fitted for the unwearied and eternal service of its God. In heaven they will "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." "It is sown a natural body,"—having the functions, the propensities, the wants of the animal; feeling it no easy task to say with Job, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food:" but "it is raised a spiritual body,"—able then to cast off all animal needs and lusts, and to say with Christ, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me."

1 Cor. xv.
51, 52.

Ib. 42.
See Locke's
note, in loc.
whose interpretation
of "sown" is
here followed.

1 John iii. 3.

1 Cor. xv.
42, 43.

Rev. iv. 8.

Job xxiii.
12.

1 Cor. xv. 44.

John iv. 34.

Thus much do we gather from Scripture, respecting the future glorious destiny of this our present perishable body. LECTURE
XXXIII. Such is the resurrection of the faithful unto the realization of that blessed state, (which St. John beheld in vision,)—when the tabernacle of God shall be with men, “and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.”

Rev. xxi.
3, 4.

It will be enough to say of the ungodly, that, as the bodies of the saints will be fitted for their eternal spiritual blessedness, so those of the sinners will be adapted for their undying, unchanging portion of spiritual agony. It is written, “we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

2 Cor. v. 10.

“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,” and knowing withal the doom that awaits the body either for weal or woe, the Apostle is earnest in entreating both Jew and Gentile, not only to glorify God in their immortal part, the spirit,—but also, to take heed how they defile that temple of their body, which even here, according to God’s mysterious mercy, may be the tabernacle of the Holy Ghost, and hereafter may be invested with a degree of dignity so high, that human conjecture is lost in its contemplation. “I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God,” is his solemn appeal to the converted Jews at Rome, “that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” And he tells them, that they, who have “the first fruits of the Spirit,” “wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body.”

Ib. 11.

Rom. xii.
1, 2.

Rom. viii.
23.

In like manner he instructs the Ephesians, that Christ is not the Redeemer of the *soul* alone, but that He is “the Saviour of the *body*” also. Earnestly and constantly does he endeavour to impress on the Corinthians, a sense of the present dignity and future glory of the *body*; a lesson more needed by the

Ephes. v. 23.
“that ministereth salvation to the body,”
Cranmer’s
Transl.

LECTURE voluptuous Greek, who had formerly looked upon the body, but as the instrument of his animal pleasures, or as the pander to his sensual lust; and who was but recently awakened to the folly of his old opinions, but newly informed of his real position in the scale of created things. At one time he warns them, that "the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord:" again, at another, he reminds them that their bodies are "members of Christ," "temples of the Holy Ghost," and that therefore the fornicator not only casts aside his membership, and defileth that temple,—not only "sinneth against his own *soul*,"—but "against his own *body*" also. So too, in his affectionate exhortation to the Thessalonians, it was not merely for their establishment in every Christian grace, and for their soul's well being, that he expresses so earnest an anxiety; but for the body's spotless purity, as destined to be hereafter the eternal companion of that soul. It was not only that he implored the Lord, to make them "to increase and abound in love one toward another;" not only that He might "establish their *hearts* unblameable in holiness before Him;" but, said the aged Apostle, "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and *body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Nor does St. Paul stand alone amongst the apostolic writers, in speaking thus loftily of the honour due unto the body: for St. Jude clearly indicates that it has a value peculiar to itself, when he tells us, that it was for the "*body* of Moses" that Michael the archangel contended with the prince of darkness; that body, which, as far as we can see, was buried by no human hands, but was honoured in its obsequies by ministrations from on high.

Although the doctrine of the dignity of the body, upon the twofold score of its present privileges and future glory, is a revelation exclusively Christian; although in the Old Testament we find no hint of any such revelation, yet it is interesting to see, amongst the Jews, the care that they took of the corpses of their relatives, and the honour that in every age was paid to them. Was it, that there was, even from the earliest period of their connexion with God, a certain sort of under-current of belief, that some mysterious value was attached to the bodies of the dead? that they were not the mere lump of clay, the worthless shell of the departed spirit,

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1 Cor. vi. 13.
Ib. 15.
Ib. 19.

1 Cor. vi.
13. 20.

1 Thess. iii.
12, 13.

Ib. v. 23.

Jude 9.

See note in
Slade's
Annot. in
loc.

as the Greeks and Romans thought, and as the modern Indians hold? We might almost conceive that some dark intimation of a truth, which Christ, some eighteen centuries afterwards, more clearly brought to light, was given to Abraham; else, wherefore should he have been so anxious to secure a burial-place in Canaan, for the corpses of his family? And wherefore, except from a kindred reason, did Joseph so "straitly" charge the children of Israel to "carry up his bones" from Egypt, upon their departure? To some traditionary belief of a similar character may, perhaps, be traced the extraordinary respect that the Jews paid to the corpses of their kindred, even after their settlement in the land of Canaan; a respect so completely identified with their national habits, as to have been very conspicuous in our Saviour's time; nay, to have lasted to this very hour. Hence, the generally expensive character of their funeral rites,—the embalming, the wrapping in cere-cloths, the covering with spices. Hence, too, the costly sepulchre removed from the haunts of men, and built in the secluded garden, or hewn out of the living rock; sepulchres, some of which, even to this day, evince the magnificent piety of the Jews of old. And surely it was from no belief exclusively worldly, that a denial of the rites of sepulture was esteemed amongst them, one of the heaviest curses that could possibly befall them.

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Gen. i. 25.
Exod. xiii.
19.

Horne's
Introd.
vol. iii. P. iv.
ch. ix. s. 4.

But it may be said, and truly said, that this was a feeling which they had in common with the Egyptians: it may be urged, therefore, that these were customs which they learned during their sojourning in the land of their captivity, and that, consequently, they cannot be traced to any divine intimation of the honour due to the body.

For aught that the Scriptures (our only sure guide, and the earliest authority upon the history of the world,) tell us to the contrary, we are just as much at liberty to conclude, that the superstitions of Egypt, on these and other points, are but the faint remains of a purer knowledge derived from Misraim, their great progenitor: and it is impossible, at this distance of time, to ascertain, how far they may, or may not have rekindled the dim light of religious knowledge by the bright torch of Abraham's faith, during his sojournings amongst

LECTURE them ; impossible also to decide, whether the Egyptians were,
 XXXIII. in these matters, the teachers or the scholars.

We, as the inheritors both of Jewish piety and apostolic wisdom, prove by our national customs, that we follow the example of the one, in honouring the dead by the free bestowal of our substance on their sepulture, whilst we give heed to the other, by the principle upon which we do it. It is our privilege to shew respect unto the body of the departed Christian, as to a temple once filled with God's immortal Spirit ; and therefore, not only not to be lightly thought of, and looked upon as a thing of no esteem, but to be regarded even as an honoured vessel, that has fulfilled the purpose for which its heavenly Fashioner had made it :—to be consigned to its mother earth, not only with the prayers and tears of surviving affection, but in “sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself.”

Burial Service.

Phil. iii. 21.

LECTURE XXXIV.

DAN. xii. 2.

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

LORD KING tells us, in his masterly “History of the Apostles’ Creed,” that “the Gnostics divided all mankind into three parts, earthly, animal, and spiritual: the first of which, and part of the second, they affirmed, would be annihilated, or reduced to nothing, by the general conflagration at the last day; whilst only the spiritual, and part of the animal, should be made immortal and eternal. To obviate which opinion, as it seems most probable, the rulers of the Church did in those days subjoin to the ‘Resurrection,’ the clause of ‘Life everlasting,’ that thereby that heresy might be contradicted and warded against.”

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“It includes,” he then goes on to say, “the final and eternal state of every man; of the damned in hell, as well as of the blessed in heaven:” it implies, “that on the one hand, the wicked and miserable shall for ever suffer under the loads of Divine vengeance; and that, on the other hand, the godly and blessed shall for ever live in the perpetual fruition of pure and undisturbed happiness.”

King on the
Creed, c. vi.
p. 407. 409.

Nor have the Gnostics stood alone, in this attempt to gain-say the truth of Scripture. In every age the spirit of infidelity has been at work, tempting the ungodly to eat, drink, and be merry, as believing that to-morrow they die,—die, as the beasts that perish,—die, to live no more. But, however strong may be their desire, to *believe* as true what they *hope* to be true,—however some may take refuge in the presumed probability of being annihilated, soul and body, and of thus escaping the just judgment of God;—whilst others, reluctant

LECTURE to go such lengths, yet as indisposed to forego the indulgence
XXXIV. of their passions, entertain the hope, that a partial or temporary punishment hereafter may atone for the sins committed in the flesh,—the Scriptures invariably represent the state succeeding the day of Judgment, as eternal and unchangeable, except, perhaps, in an increase of intensity, whether of suffering or of joy.

When they speak of the future position of those blessed ones who die in the Lord, there is no hint given of the cessation of their happiness, no period mentioned when there shall be any essential change in their condition. Everlasting life is their portion; their privilege, to reign with Christ for ever and ever. The weight of glory, reserved for the saints of God, is called eternal; eternal their salvation, eternal their redemption, eternal their inheritance. Are these strong, yet simple expressions (a few, be it remembered, out of thousands of a similar character), mere figures of speech? rhetorical ornaments, whose only end can be, to delude the credulous godly into a false estimate of the principle, upon which they are called upon to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering? It cannot be! As in all passages in which eternity is spoken of as connected with God, the word is to be taken in its simple literal sense; so, surely, the same rule must be applied in the interpretation of the word, when used with reference to those, whose privilege it is to dwell with God in the spirit. Is the rule, then, to be relaxed, when applied to the ungodly? Are God's threats towards them to be looked upon as figurative, or explained away as restricted, when the promises "in Him are yea, and in Him amen?"

Nay, in each case we must take His revealed word even as we find it; and, if the eternity of heaven or hell be a thing of allegory, it would be hard to say what part of Holy Writ, whether history or prophecy, threat or promise, encouragement or warning, may not be deemed allegory as well! Everlasting shame and contempt are placed in juxtaposition with everlasting life; everlasting and unquenchable is the fire reserved for the ungodly, everlasting is their destruction, eternal the vengeance allotted to them, eternal their damnation. For ever to them is "the mist of darkness" reserved,—day and night no rest is theirs,—"and the smoke of their torment

Rev. xxii. 5.
 Luke xviii.
 30.
 2 Cor. iv. 17.
 Heb. v. 9.
 Ib. ix. 12.
 Ib. 15.

2 Cor. i. 20.

Dan. xii. 2.
 Matt. xviii.
 8.
 Luke iii. 17.
 Mark ix. 43.
 46.
 2 Thess. i. 9.
 Jude 7.
 Mark iii. 29.
 2 Pet. ii. 17.
 Rev. xiv. 11.
 Ib. xx. 10.

ascendeth up for ever and ever." If ever there was plain speaking in the world, this is it: and it were vain to turn round and to ask, why are such expressions, as "everlasting destruction," and "death" as the wages of sin, used when speaking of the future portion of the ungodly, unless real destruction (annihilation of the soul, that is,) be meant? But is not the soul, we may reply, destroyed in all its most glorious qualities? is it not dead to all those highest purposes for which it was created, and to which, with God's blessing, it may arrive,—when it loses, by its perversity, that high station which Christ died to secure to it? when it is banished for ever from that presence of God, into which Christ died to usher it? This, then, is the destruction of the soul alluded to; the utter extinction of all those glorious hopes, services, capacities, and privileges, to which it might have attained, by a right use of the means and opportunities of grace afforded it, in this its state of trial,—the everlasting banishment from God's presence, the eternity of an existence with Satan and his fallen companions¹.

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2 Thess. i. 9.
Rom. vi. 23.

But the Romish Church endeavours to compromise matters by teaching, that there are punishments in the next world which are strictly disciplinary, their object being to purge away those sins which are not fully compensated for in this life; and thus she tells us of a state called "purgatory," "in which, as in a prison, the souls are purged after this life; to wit, that so they may be able to enter into heaven, where no unclean thing enters in."

Bellarm. de
Purgat. l. i.
c. l. quoted
in Bever-
idge, on
Art. xxii.

"A fond thing" this, as our Article well expresses it, "vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God."

Art. xxii.

A doctrine this, which renders our deliverance from the penalty of sin dependent, in part at least, upon our future penal sufferings, instead of being made to rest exclusively

¹ "If," says Bishop Pearson, "the fire, in which the reprobates are to be tormented, be everlasting; if so absolutely everlasting, that it shall never be quenched; if so certainly never to be quenched, that the smoke thereof shall ascend for ever and ever; if those which are cast into it shall be tormented for ever and ever (all which the Scriptures expressly teach); then shall the wicked never be so consumed as to be annihilated, but shall subsist for ever, and be co-eternal to the tormenting flames."—Pearson, vol. i. p. 661.

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upon the meritorious sufferings of Christ; a doctrine, which derogates from the fulness of Christ's expiatory sacrifice, and robs Him of the entire work of our salvation. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," says St. John. "If any one say," declares the Church of Rome, "that after the grace of justification received, the fault is so pardoned to every penitent sinner, and the guilt of eternal punishment is so blotted out, that there remains no guilt of temporal punishment to be done away in this world, or that which is to come, in purgatory, before the passage can be opened into the kingdom of heaven, let him be accursed." "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," says St. Paul. "There is a purgatory," declares the Romanist, "and the souls detained there are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar;" thus placing under condemnation some who are destined hereafter to be with Christ Jesus, and pronouncing, that their sins are to be purged away by the prayers of the faithful, and the offices of the priesthood: a fertile source of gain indeed to the servants of the Roman altar, but a dangerous delusion to the souls of their flocks.

Had any punishment in a spiritual state been disciplinary or expiatory, even in part, we may well suppose, that an exception would have been made in favour of those angels "which kept not their first estate;" who might by punishment have been corrected and amended. But we know, that the four thousand years, which intervened between the fall of the first Adam and the temptation of the second, worked no improvement in them, purged away no sin, qualified no hostility against their outraged God:—and the constant efforts of their still rebellious leader, who, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," will afford a sufficient proof, that his purpose has undergone no change;—that he will continue to do his utmost, to mar the work of salvation through Christ Jesus. We must conclude, with the Apostle, that God "hath reserved" them "in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day."

The notion of a purgatory is unsupported by Holy Writ, unsanctioned by the early Fathers: nay, their words lead us to conclude, that they, at least, were content to abide by the

Conc. Trid.
Sess. vi.
can. xxx.

Rom. viii. 1.

Conc. Trid.
Sess. xxv.
Decret. de
Purgatorio.

Jude 6.

1 Pet. v. 8.

Jude 6.
See also
2 Pet. ii. 4.

Apostle's inspired declaration, that as soon as his soul left the body, it would be "present with the Lord." It is a notion, too, which peculiarly fosters the love of sinning, for there are, beyond all question, many who would go on still in their wickedness, with more desperate recklessness than now, provided they could promise to themselves, that the punishment for that wickedness was disciplinary, not eternal; and that they might look forward to an hour, when their sins might be purged away, and themselves presented clean, through their own sufferings, before the mercy-seat of God.

LECTURE
XXXIV.
Chrys.
in Gen.
Hom. 36.
s. 4.
Macar.
Egypt.
Hom. 22.
Athanas. de
Virgin. 18.
2 Cor. v. 8.

The doctrine seems to have had its origin in an obvious difficulty. As far as we can see, the shades of difference must be slender, between the lowest amount of Christian virtue admissible into heaven, and that amount which just stops short of it, and consigns its possessor to the misery of hell. "Can it be consistent with the justice of God," it is confidently asked, "where the difference in point of desert is so very trifling, to make the difference in point of retribution nothing less than endless happiness for the one, and endless misery for the other?"

Lingard's
Catechetical
Instr. p. 46.

The Romish Church attempts to clear away this difficulty, and to reconcile God's justice to human conceptions of its propriety and limits, by establishing this place of intermediate punishment, where the souls of those, who are just under the standard which qualifies them for heaven, may be raised up to it by an indefinite period of penal suffering. In establishing this unscriptural doctrine, two things are forgotten; first, that it positively does away (as we have before seen) with the leading principle of the atonement, that it is Christ's blood *alone* which cleanseth us from sin, and that neither the martyr's sufferings, nor the sinner's agony, can in the least degree contribute to justification;—and secondly, that all these difficulties are of the human mind alone, arising from the finite nature of our capacities, which are unable to grapple with the mysteries of the unseen world. It is consistent with man's restless impatience, to endeavour to anticipate spiritual knowledge, and to strive to ascertain the mode, how God's mercy and His justice may be reconciled; and how His punishments may be exactly measured by our crimes. Yet, little as we can possibly know of these mysterious matters, enough of

P. 409, 410.

LECTURE the joys of heaven, and the horrors of hell, has been revealed,
 XXXIV. to minister comfort to the godly, and a solemn warning to the
 obdurate sinner.

When St. Paul speaks of that "rest" which is in store for the people of God, he makes use of a remarkable expression to describe its nature. The word in our translation rendered "rest" is, in the original, "a keeping of a Sabbath." The services, then, of the redeemed, according to the Apostle's declaration, form one unbroken, everlasting Sabbath. "They are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." No sorrow can enter into that blessed place, which Christ has prepared for as many as receive Him. No toil is there to weary, no curse of sin to bewilder, no sting of death to appal the redeemed child of God. But it is his, to see his Maker face to face; his to rejoice, that every trace of the old Adam is now obliterated for ever; his, to know Him as He is; his, to love and serve, and to obey Him. "God," said a son of Israel, who sang full sweetly, though in uninspired strains,—“God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity.”

Heb. iv. 9.
 σαββατισ-
 μός.

Rev. vii.
 15—17.
 See also,
 xxi. 4.
 xiv. 13.
 xxii. 3.

Wisd. ii. 23.

It were vain to enquire further into the exact nature of the joys of that glorious hereafter. It is enough to say of them, as said the Apostle of the blessings of the New Covenant, which were hidden awhile from angels and from men, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." All beyond is vague conjecture. Even as the prophets of old time could not look into the dim mist of ages yet to come, without God's special inspiration; so we cannot draw aside that veil, which shrouds from our sight the mysteries of the unseen world. The babe of yesterday, when nestling in its mother's arms, has no power of conceiving the nature of those stirring scenes, into which it will hereafter, if spared to live, be ushered;—neither can the soul, when con-

1 Cor. ii. 9.

finer within its earthly tabernacle, entirely comprehend its future destiny. There is as much difference between the instinct of the infant and the intelligence of the full-grown man, as between the highest intellect here, and the spiritualized mind hereafter. In each case the darkened glass is to be removed, that we may see things as they really are, "that we may know, even as we are known."

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1 Cor. xiii.
12.

How different this from the fabled paradise of the Moham-
medan, where the most degrading passions, those which we
hold in common with the animal, may be gratified to the full:
a paradise, fitted indeed for the sensualist, but ill adapted to
the spiritual longings of him, whose hope of immortality has
led him to purify himself, even as his God is pure!

Koran, c. 56.
See also,
Sale's
Prelim.
Disc. s. iv.
and Van
Mildert's
Boyle
Lect. s. vii.
vol. i. p. 221.

And solemn, indeed, are the warnings which the Scriptures
put forth, in their descriptions of the damned; warnings of such
an awful character, that they who will not be won by the
hopes of heaven, and the tender love of God, may at least be
checked by the fears of hell, and the dread of Almighty ven-
geance! At one time, hell is spoken of as a place "where the
worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched:" at another,
"as the lake of fire and brimstone," where the ungodly "shall
be tormented day and night for ever and ever," "where there
is weeping and gnashing of teeth;" a place, where vengeance
shall be taken "on them that know not God, and that obey
not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be
punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of
the Lord, and from the glory of His power."

1 John iii. 3.

Mark ix. 46.

Rev. xx. 10.

2 Thess. i.
8, 9.

It matters but little, whether these expressions are to be
interpreted figuratively or literally. Enough has been revealed
to convince the believer in God's word, that not only will the
agony of hell be eternal, but of that exquisite character, of
which the keenest mortal anguish, whether of body or of
mind, is but a shadow. As these pains are to be continued
for ever, so the body must, in some miraculous manner, be
fitted to endure them; for we know that, in this life, pro-
tracted bodily and mental torture will soon break down the
very strongest frame.

The expression "death,"—which is so often applied in Holy
Writ, to indicate the future condition of the ungodly,—when
viewed together with the eternity of their punishment, may

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perhaps help us to as clear an understanding of the nature of their sufferings, as our limited capacities can entertain. It would seem to be an eternal agony, that of hell, as sharp as the death-struggle of the wicked: and who, that has seen that awful sight, can ever forget the solemn warning thereby given against unrepented sin? the soul, battling to be released; the body, yearning to retain awhile its old companion; the conscience at last, but too late, awakened to the truth of those fears, which it knows will presently become realities: no glad remembrance of the past, no joyous anticipations of the future; but the knowledge forced upon it, Heb. x. 27. "that there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." What, if this awful scene, this bitter agony, were extended,—not over a few mournful minutes, or, it may be, hours,—but over the boundless duration of eternity: the body and soul to know no respite from the sharp anguish of the death-struggle; but to be always dying, never dead; always in the tumult of despair, never at rest!

Were the pains of hell limited to the reproaches of the conscience, they would be enough indeed; recollecting, as we must, that not, until they are in the spirit, will the ungodly know all they have lost, all they might have gained. Then only can they appreciate the relative value of the soul, and those earthly toys which they have coveted in exchange for it. Then only can they fully understand their folly and guilt, in having dishonoured their Maker, disbelieved their Redeemer, cast away the warnings and the pleadings of their Sanctifier. And if, with the rich man in the parable, it be indeed given them, as in the intermediate state, to gaze for ever across that impassable gulf which separates the redeemed from the damned; how tenfold will all this agony be increased, when they will be compelled, not only to hear of, but to *see* that inheritance, which they have lost,—not only to feel their own torments, but to see the blessedness of those who rest in Abraham's bosom!

Luke xiii.
28.

But their miseries have been summed up by an able hand. "To know," says Bishop Van Mildert, "'that life and death, blessing and cursing, have been set before them,' and that their sad destiny is the result of their own perverseness, is in

itself a consideration sufficient to overwhelm the mind with the bitterness of self-reproach.

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“But, secondly, this will be greatly aggravated by the continuance of those evil dispositions which, we are assured, the wicked will carry with them into the other world. The punishments of a future state will fall upon those only who have become incurably wicked; ‘past feeling,’ ‘given over to a reprobate mind;’ and who, consequently, will go into that state with tempers and inclinations incapable of amendment. These hateful qualities will still remain, and will be their own tormentors. ‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be.’

Eph. iv. 19.
Rom. i. 28.

Rev. xxii.
11, 12.

“Therefore, as the rewards of the righteous will partly consist in carrying on and perfecting those good dispositions, which by God’s grace they had cultivated here; so shall the sufferings of the wicked be in part effected by the continuance and the increase of those evil passions and propensities, which, even here, are a constant source of disquietude and torment.—Envy, hatred, malice, rage, disappointment, operating perhaps upon a quicker sensibility, and continually awakened by surrounding objects, cannot but excessively aggravate the burthen of unavailing remorse. To subdue these emotions will then be impossible. The Spirit of God will no longer ‘strive with them.’ Their faith will be that of the devils, ‘who believe and tremble;’ not that which ‘worketh by love’ to God or man. They will feel the sorrow that ‘worketh death;’ not that which ‘worketh repentance, not to be repented of.’ They will become victims of despair; despair, arising from the impossibility of retrieving what is lost, or of being liberated from the evil that is come upon them.”

Van Mil-
dert’s Serm.
vol. i.
s. xxv.
p. 509—511.

One more point, and that of no common interest, remains to be considered.—Shall we know each other hereafter? Although nothing *positive* has been *said* upon this head in Holy Writ, enough has been *implied*, to enable us to answer in the affirmative.

It must be first observed, that St. Paul’s words clearly

LECTURE
XXXIV.2 Cor. xii.
1—4.1 Cor. xiii.
12.See Rom.
vii. 13.

Rev. xiii. 8.

authorize us to expect a remarkable increase of knowledge in our spiritual state; an increase, which it was given to him in part to experience during his lifetime, when he was caught up into paradise, and beheld the wonders of the invisible world.—“Now,” he tells us, “we see through a glass darkly;” the clearest views, that is, of the divine dealings to which we are able to attain, bearing as little likeness to the bright reality, as the prospect of a landscape through a dim and darkened glass: “now, we know in part;” much, nay most, must be taken upon faith: hereafter, faith will terminate in sight; we shall see God face to face; we shall know, even as also we are known; the earthly shall have become spiritual; the finite, infinite. We shall understand, that is, God’s dealings with us, and also His own attributes, as clearly as He Himself does: and all those dispensations, the end and immediate object of which we cannot now fathom, will be unfolded to us, and proved to have been not only identified with God’s justice and His mercy, but even to have flowed necessarily from them. Then we shall see the wisdom of the peculiar position we have severally held in life;—how each visitation, whether of sickness, of temptation, or of sorrow, was a mercy in disguise; and, more than that, even the best calculated to promote our individual spiritual welfare. Then, for the first time, shall we understand the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and adequately wonder at, and bless as well, God’s infinite compassion in providing for Himself an offering for this sin.—Now, our knowledge is limited to facts; then, the causes of those facts will be unveiled: and all those mysteries will be made clear as the sun at noonday, which, in our present state, bewilder the soundest and clearest understanding. God’s existence from eternity,—the generation of the only begotten Son, “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world,”—the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son,—the cause of the value of the soul in God’s sight;—these, we may reasonably conclude, are at least amongst the points of knowledge, which are laid up in store for the spiritualized man hereafter.

If such, then, be our increase of wisdom with regard to the things that are of God, is it reasonable to suppose, that our faculties will be bounded, when applied to the things that are of man? or that we shall know less of each other

than we do at present? Will it be given us fully to comprehend the nature of our trials, our sorrows, our temptations, our deliverances, and shall we be ignorant of the persons, amongst whom all these incidents in our pilgrimage have taken place? If so,—then we shall still know but in part; and God's ambassador (with reverence be it spoken) promises, in his Master's name, more than that Master intends to realize. But there are, as has been before stated, passages in Scripture which imply, at least to some minds, expressly the contrary.

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When David's little child was ill, heavy was his grief, and strong his pleading, that this child of sin, and prayers, and tears, might be spared to him. When he perceived that God would not hear his prayer, and that the little one was dead, he arose from his place and posture of mourning,—he dried his tears,—he resumed his usual occupations,—“he came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped.” His reason for this extraordinary conduct was given in his answer to his attendants, who probably thought that grief had unsettled their royal master's mind: “while the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live. But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*” Where would have been the comfort of this knowledge, unless he had known as well, that, when he went to him, he should be able to recognize, though after the lapse of many a year, the loved one he had lost? This persuasion of David would seem to indicate, that our remembrance of each other will be as much strengthened hereafter, as any other faculty or kind of knowledge. For where is the old man who could safely declare, that he could so clearly, and so distinctly, retrace the features of an infant he had long since lost, as to say of it, amongst millions of other children, “this is mine?” A similar proof of increased knowledge may be found in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where the unhappy sinner is described as recognizing and addressing, not Lazarus only, whom he had known when alive, but Abraham, who was dead hundreds of years before he was born, and with whose features he could not possibly have been acquainted, except it were given to him as a part of that intelligence, which seems to be almost a

2 Sam. xii.
15—23.

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XXXIV.Luke xiii.
28.

necessary accompaniment of our spiritual natures,—a privilege to the faithful, an additional source of agony to the wicked :—agony indeed, when we “ shall see,” and if see then recognize, “ Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and ourselves thrust out.”

Now this increase of knowledge is spoken of as belonging to the intermediate state ; we may safely conclude, then, that a less degree of knowledge will not be imparted to us in our perfected state.

John xiv.
2, 3.

Again, the first source of comfort that our Saviour gave to His disciples, on that night of sorrow when their hearts were troubled for His prophesied departure, was a promise, that their personal intercourse should be renewed in heaven :—“ In My Father’s house are many mansions ; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.” As these words were meant to reconcile them to their temporary loss, ill would they have been calculated for that purpose, if they were not permitted to understand them in their literal sense, as holding out the certainty of mutual recognition, and mutual congratulations, in the possession of the blessed privilege of being for ever with their Lord. St. Paul seems to have understood the promises in this sense, when he expressed his confidence of being with Christ, at his departure from this world.

Phil. i. 23.
See also,
1 Thess. iv.
15—18.

We may conclude, then, that those dear ties of kindred, of friendship, or of affection, which are given us in this world to gladden the otherwise toilsome hours of our pilgrimage, will be interrupted only, not destroyed by death : we may surely believe, that all who sleep in Jesus will rise again with Him, as one glad redeemed family, to meet to part no more ; to know, to understand, to love afresh.—But, even as their bodies will undergo that mysterious change, which is to mould them anew in the likeness of the glorified Saviour, so too will it be with the better part, the soul : that will be changed as well ; its affections spiritualized and refined, purged from all earthly dross, freed from the selfishness, the passion, the animal feeling, the liability to sin. It will be like Adam’s spirit, when he came first from his Creator’s hands, made

after God's image, after His likeness,—and made to endure in that resemblance throughout eternity. LECTURE
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One passing doubt we all, perhaps, have felt; namely, whether this mutual recognition may not cloud our otherwise perfect happiness, by pressing upon us the conviction, that many a loved one of our friends, or kindred, (loved tenderly, though sinful,) is not only absent from our own portion of blessedness, but suffering, at the same time, the everlasting torments of the damned. We shall not then judge of these things as men, but even as the angels of God; and we do not read that their happiness is one jot clouded by the knowledge, that many of their own old companions are thrust for ever from the presence of their God. To us, then, even as to them, we may reasonably suppose that the power will be given, by God's providential arrangement, to be as satisfied with His condemning justice towards others, as grateful for His redeeming mercy to ourselves. We must now rest content with the belief, that, as God has promised, so He will fulfil; that, if we are bidden to enter into the joy of our Lord, He will find means to make that joy as perfect as it is eternal. If, then, we are privileged to believe, that one portion of that perfect knowledge, which is promised to us hereafter, will be to recognize and hold communion with each other; it requires very little exercise of our judgment, to admit the powerfully practical nature of this doctrine. How will that compulsory recognition enhance the agony of the condemned sinner! how heavy an addition will it be to his own sorrows, to be doomed to have always before his eyes the misery of those whom he had tempted to sin and fall; to hear the mutual reproaches and curses of his companions in iniquity; and to know withal, that from this awful sight and hearing there is no escape nor respite, for ever and ever! Well may we take to heart our Saviour's solemn warning;—"it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"

Matt. xviii.
7.

And do we indeed believe, that it will be given to the godly once more to renew, and that for ever, those ties which earthly affection has made passing dear, and which spiritualized love will render well-nigh holy?—Then, if we are truly anxious to secure the privilege of abiding with Christ, and His

LECTURE redeemed flock in eternity, must we walk throughout this
XXXIV. our pilgrimage, even as He walked. Like Him, we must live in the world, yet above the world; like Him, we must fight against the several enemies of the soul of man;—like Him, become meek, gentle, patient, humble, pure, forgiving, holy, merciful, unresisting.—It is enough:—the disciple must study and copy his Master's bright example here, before he can hope to be admitted hereafter into the everlasting fellowship of His accepted brethren.

Part III.

The Christian's Duty.

Catechist. You said, that your Godfathers and Godmothers did promise for you, that you should keep God's Commandments. Tell me how many there be?

Answer. Ten.

Q. Which be they?

A. The same which God spake in the twentieth Chapter of Exodus, saying, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

I. Thou shalt have none other gods but me.

II. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shew mercy unto thousands in them that love me, and keep my commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain.

IV. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

V. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt do no murder.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his.

Q. What dost thou chiefly learn by these commandments?

A. I learn two things: my duty towards God, and my duty towards my neighbour.

Q. What is thy duty towards God?

A. My duty towards God, is to believe in Him, to fear Him, and to love Him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; to worship Him, to give Him thanks, to put my whole trust in Him, to call upon Him, to honour His holy Name and His Word, and to serve Him truly all the days of my life.

Q. What is thy duty towards thy neighbour?

A. My duty towards my neighbour, is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me: To love, honour, and succour my father and mother: To honour and obey the King, and all that are put in authority under him. To submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters: To order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters: To hurt no body by word or deed: To be true and just in all my dealings: To bear no malice nor hatred in my heart: To keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil speaking, lying, and slandering: To keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity: Not to covet nor desire other men's goods; but to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me.

LECTURE XXXV.

ECCLES. xii. 13.

“Fear God, and keep His Commandments : for this is the whole duty of man.”

Two of those conditions, upon which we were admitted to the participation of baptismal privileges, have been already discussed ; viz., first, that we should “renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh :” secondly, that we should “believe all the articles of the Christian faith.” It remains to consider the third condition ; that in which we promised, through our sponsors, “to keep God’s holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of our life.” To instruct us in this part of our Christian duty, our Catechism points to that condensed summary of the will of God, which was originally given to the Jews through the instrumentality of Moses, as the moral conditions of that covenant which He established with His people, in the third month after their deliverance from their Egyptian slavery. This summary must be taken, as God’s solemn declaration of the principal points to which we are to turn our attention, with regard to our conduct towards Him, and towards our fellow-creatures ; a summary, bearing the same relation to our religious, moral, and social duties, as the Apostles’ Creed does to the several points of our belief. In each case the bare facts are laid down, and the deductions from these facts, as they regard both doctrine and discipline, are left to the piety and wisdom of man, aided and enlightened by a careful study of the Holy Volume.

As the commandments were, in the first instance, written on two tables of stone by the finger of the Almighty Creator,

LECTURE
XXXV.

Baptismal
Service.

Exod. xxxi.
18.

LECTURE
XXXV.

Iren. adv.
Hæres.
lib. iv. c. 15,
16.

so are they naturally divided into two classes: the first four commandments teaching us our duty towards our Maker, the last six referring to our obligations to each other. In both, we are rather reminded of things which, from the earliest period of the world's history, men were bound to observe, as intimately connected with God's supremacy and His creatures' dependence, than taught any thing intrinsically new, or exclusively belonging to the Jewish covenant.

Intended, as these commandments are, "as a summary of human duty, they both may, and must, be understood, by those who are capable of penetrating into the depth of their meaning, to imply more than they express. And therefore, to comprehend their full extent, it will be requisite to observe the following rules.

"Where any sin is forbidden in them, the opposite duty is implicitly enjoined: and where any duty is enjoined, the opposite sin is implicitly forbidden. Where the highest degree of any thing evil is prohibited; whatever is faulty in the same kind, though in a lower degree, is by consequence prohibited. And where one instance of virtuous behaviour is commanded, every other, that hath the same nature, and same reason for it, is understood to be commanded too. What we are expected to abstain from, we are expected to avoid, as far as we can, all temptations to it, and occasions of it: and what we are expected to practise, we are expected to use all fit means, that may better enable us to practise it. All that we are bound to do ourselves, we are bound, on fitting occasions, to exhort and assist others to do, when it belongs to them: and all that we are bound not to do, we are to tempt nobody else to do, but to keep them back from it, as much as we have opportunity. The Ten Commandments, excepting two that required enlargement, are delivered in few words: which brief manner of speaking hath great majesty in it. But explaining them according to these rules,—which are natural and rational in themselves, favoured by ancient Jewish writers, authorized by our Blessed Saviour, and certainly designed by the makers of the Catechism to be used in expounding it,—we shall find, that there is no part of the moral law, but may be fitly ranked under them."

The preface to the commandments, as given in our Catechism, would seem to indicate, that they were obligatory only upon the Jew,—referring, as it does, to the circumstances under which, and alluding to if not addressing the people, to whom they were originally given. “I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

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XXXV.

It is true, that we Christians may say of Him, as said the prophet Isaiah, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

Isa. xxv. 9.

But He has not brought *us* out of the land of Egypt, nor delivered *us* out of the house of bondage:—how then do these commands refer to us? The Christian must not forget (what indeed is a great privilege to remember), that, as “the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,”—the shadow of good things to come,—so the main incidents connected with that law were intended by God, as typical of things, which were hereafter destined to take place, upon a more extended scale, in the Christian covenant. Were the Jews solemnly reminded of the reason why they were bound to their Almighty Ruler, in that, when there was no one to hear the cry of the oppressed, He had brought them “out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm?” Even so will the Christian bring to his remembrance, that, when there was no intercessor for his sin, God’s own “arm brought salvation unto him,” delivered him from a worse than Egyptian slavery, brought him from out a more degrading bondage, the slavery of sin, the bondage of Satan; and that, therefore, an even higher obligation rests upon the Christian, to hold, as binding, laws which were given in commemoration of the typical deliverance of the Jew.

Gal. iii. 24.

Deut. xxvi.
8.

Isa. lix. 16.

But there is another reason;—it is because God, manifest in the flesh, ratified that which was delivered by God, revealed in the Spirit.

During the last days of our Lord’s earthly ministry, when question after question was being put to Him by the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees, that they might have occasion, by His answers, to accuse Him before the Romans, or to destroy His popularity with the people, a certain lawyer came

LECTURE XXXV. to Him with the inquiry, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" He alluded to the well-known opinion of the Pharisees, that "such a multiplicity of precepts as the law contained was too great for any one to observe; and therefore all that could be required was, that each should select to himself one or two great and important duties, on account of which, if individually observed, his transgressions in other respects would be overlooked."

Porteus,
Lect. xviii.
vol. ii.
p. 174.

Matt. xxii.
37, 38, 39.

It was to procure the opinion of One, who had but just now given a striking proof of his deep knowledge and power of application of the Scriptures in confutation of erroneous opinions, it was to gain the authority of Jesus, the great Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee, upon this debateable point, that the question was asked. The Saviour answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Girdle-
stone's Ser-
mons on the
Catechism,
p. 40.

It has been well remarked, then, that "when we are asked, what commandments we are bound to obey? we should not be far short of the whole in saying, two; namely, those which Christ spake in the 22nd chapter of Matthew. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,—and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The honour of God and the welfare of His creatures are equally identified with the keeping of these commandments; amply bearing out those two distinguishing features of the new covenant, which were put forth by angels' lips, at the announcement of the Saviour's birth, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Luke ii. 14.

It is well known, that a difference of opinion exists between ourselves and the Roman Catholics, respecting the mode of dividing the commandments; and that a charge has been brought against them, that they systematically omit the second commandment, because it is inconsistent with their practice of setting up, as objects of veneration, graven images of the Saviour, the Virgin, the saints and martyrs of the Church. The case seems to be this. The Roman Catholic Church adopts that division of the Commandments,

August.
Serm. de
Temp.
250. s. 3.

which was in use in the time of St. Augustine,—joining the two first as one,—and splitting the last into two: in this division they have been followed by the Lutheran Church. We on the other hand, at the Reformation, took that division which seems to have been the most ancient.

LECTURE
XXXV.
Philo de
Decal.
Joseph.
Antiq.
L. iii. c. 5.
s. 5.

We should remember, first, that Scripture itself lays down no precise rule, as to the division of the Commandments: and secondly, that the rule, as adopted by the Church of Rome, is not one of their own invention, not first put forth at the Council of Trent, but at least as old as the time of Augustine. It is evident, that in the days of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, in the eighth century for example, there was considerable doubt upon the matter. The venerable Bede, in his short exposition of the Ten Commandments, gives both methods of division, being careful at the same time to retain the *substance* of the second commandment, as we have it now. In the succeeding century, our national divines had ceased to look upon the worship of substantial forms, as an usage “altogether execrated by the Church of God.” “They paid religious honours to the cross; they paid them to graven images; they paid them to real or imaginary remains of sainted mortals.” And it is not a little remarkable, that this perversion of truth paved the way for the adoption of the Roman division of the Ten Commandments, and of the modern Roman practice, of omitting all notice of God’s prohibition against graven images in their condensed summary of them. Two Anglo-Saxon summaries of this description are extant; whilst in a third, the decalogue of king Alfred, the Roman division is adopted in the main,—the third commandment filling the second place, and the second, under the mutilated form “work thou not golden gods, or silveren,” being counted as the tenth¹.

See Soames’
Bampt.
Lect. note
to s. iv.
p. 248.

Ib. p. 204.

Ib. p. 248.

¹ It would almost seem as if the pious monarch had been aware of the impossibility of reconciling the existing practice, as recommended by the Church, with the words of Scripture as he found them; and that so he turned the commandment out of its place, in deference to his spiritual teachers: and yet, desirous to make some compromise between his real knowledge and his supposed duty to the rulers of the Church, he inserted, at the end of the decalogue, just so much of the commandment as would save appearances, and in no wise contradict the superstitious practice of the day. His conscience would be satisfied

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Nor does our own Church appear to have had any very settled opinion upon the subject, in the earlier days of the Reformation. For instance, in the "Institution of a Christian Man," put forth by the authority of Henry VIII. in 1537; and again in the "Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man," published in 1543, the modern Anglican division is followed: whilst in the three Primers put forth in the same reign, viz., "A Goodly Primer," 1535; "The Manual of Prayers, or the Primer in English," 1539; "King Henry's Primer," 1545; as well as in Justus Jonas' Catechism, translated or revised by Archbishop Cranmer in 1548, we find the Roman division, or that of St. Augustine, adopted. The division, in use at the present day, appears to have been first *established* in the Anglican Church in 1549: when the Decalogue was inserted in the Catechism, in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI. We find the same division in the second book, put forth in 1552, when the Decalogue was first incorporated with the Liturgy. Where then is the error of the Church of Rome?

Not in the division; for, in that respect, she does but follow the opinion of one of the old Fathers of the Church, in the absence of any Scriptural authority upon the subject: not that she systematically omits all notice of the commandment, in her more elaborate disquisitions upon the Decalogue; for in her two most important Catechisms, the question of bowing down before, or, as she translates it, "adoring graven images," is discussed at great length.

But we find fault with her,—because, in those expositions which are for the learned eye, she is compelled to resort to subtleties to defend the practice of bowing down before the graven image; a practice unknown in the earlier days of the Church of Christ,—unsanctioned by Scripture,—and, however harmless, in a religious point of view, to the educated who can make the distinction between veneration and adoration, between the image, as the representation of that which is unseen, and the image, as the object of worship, it is a practice full of danger to the ignorant and superstitious vulgar.

that he at least did not regard as a god, the gold or silver image before which he bowed, and therefore did not break the commandment which forbade him to make or worship such.

Vide
Catech. ad
Ordinan.
p. 3. s. 2.
Catech. ad
Parochos,
p. iii. cap. 2.

Id. and see
Lingard's
Catech.
Inst. p. 62.

Again we find fault with her, because, in her shorter Cate-
 chisms and summaries of the Decalogue, which are mainly
 intended for the unlearned, all notice of the very existence of
 such a prohibition is omitted ¹.

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XXXV.

See the
Pisan Cate-
chism.

And when it is remembered, that in countries, where public opinion goes hand in hand with the peculiar views of the Roman Catholic Church, the study of the Bible (the only sure corrective of error) is discouraged at least, and very commonly forbidden to the laity,—we must conclude that there are thousands upon thousands who are ignorant to their dying day, that God has forbidden them their universal practice of bowing down before the graven image. That this is no imaginary danger, any resident in Roman Catholic countries, conversant with the habits and opinions of the lower classes, can abundantly testify.

Before entering upon a detailed examination of each commandment of the first table, it may be well to consider briefly the principal points of our duty towards God, as laid down by our Catechism, and derived from the first four commandments.

The Christian, then, is to believe in Him, for “he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him :” believe in Him, in His threefold character of Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier ; believe in His promises, even as did Abraham, who hoped against hope, who “staggered not at the promise of God through

Heb. xi. 6.

¹ Bp. Heber, in a note to his first Bampton Lecture, p. 40—42, has entered very fully into this question ; and noticed several instances in which the omission alluded to occurs.

The same omission is to be found in (I believe) *all* the summaries in use in Italy. In one, put forth by the present Archbishop of Pisa for the use of young people within his diocese, the abstract of the commandments runs thus :—

- I. Non avrai altro Iddio avanti di me.
- II. Non nominare il nome di Dio invano.
- III. Ricordati di santificare le Feste.
- IV. Onorare il Padre, e la Madre.
- V. Non ammazzare.
- VI. Non fornicare.
- VII. Non rubare.
- VIII. Non fare falso testimonio.
- IX. Non desiderare la roba d'altri.
- X. Non desiderare la donna d'altri.

LECTURE unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God :”
 XXXV.
 Rom. iv. 20. believe in His threats, and so fear Him, remembering that
 Ps. cxi. 10. “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” And
 Him alone must the Christian fear; not shrinking from his
 duty through fear of the rebuke, the scorn, the mockery of
 the worldly or profane, who can but for a season fret and vex
 the godly, but only fearing Him, “which, after He hath
 Luke xii. 5. killed, hath power to cast into Hell.”

And the Christian is to “love” his God: to love Him,
 1 John iv. who hath “first loved us;” and so loved us that, “while we
 19. were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” And he is to love
 Rom. v. 8. “with all the heart,” Him who has claimed that heart of all
 See also, “His children: “with all the mind,”—setting God always be-
 John xv. 12. fore him; having to say with David, “O how I love Thy law,
 1 John iii. 16. it is my meditation all the day,” and “I have remembered
 Prov. xxiii. 26. Thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept Thy law :”
 Ps. cxix. 97. “with all the soul,”—remembering, that it is not alone that
 Ib. 55. immortal part of us which more peculiarly belongs to Him,
 as a portion of His own Eternal Spirit, but that “the Lord is
 Lam. iii. 25. good to the soul that seeketh Him :” “with all the strength,”
 —not ardent and enthusiastic towards the creature, and lan-
 guid and lukewarm to the Creator; not suffering any deeper
 affection to occupy the heart than the love of God, nor per-
 mitting its highest energies to be divided between the Lord of
 all, and the potsherds of the earth. Nor is this love without
 its promised blessing. If sorrows come as thick as autumn
 leaves, and the poor loving heart of the patient child of God
 be sorely tried, and well-nigh tempted to doubt His tender
 mercies, how is it comforted by the knowledge, that “all
 Rom. viii. things work together for good to them that love God;” and
 28. how is it sustained by the something more than hope,—the
 confidence, that to all, who love and faint not, will the Apost-
 le’s prayer be realized, and that “grace” will “be with all
 Ephes. vi. them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity !”
 24.

And as the Christian is taught to worship God,—so, as a
 John iv. 24. spirit, he will “worship Him in spirit and in truth,” not with
 mere forms, as the Pharisee of old; not with vain emblems,
 as the Romanist; not with lip service, as the mere nominal
 Christian; “not with eye service, as men-pleasers; but as the
 Eph. vi. 6. servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”

So will he give “thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He will thank God for His unspeakable mercies, in the creation, redemption, and sanctification of his soul; for His forbearance with him, in his many backslidings; for his earthly comforts, and his spiritual privileges,—for his “means of grace, and hope of glory,”—for his abundance, as enabling him to minister to the wants of others,—for his privations, as teaching him dependence upon the Giver of all good gifts,—for his joys, as gleams of God’s sunshine on his earthly path,—for his sorrows, as blessings in disguise, and mercies wrapped up in mystery:—so that, even in this his mortal pilgrimage, in weal or woe alike, he may utter the glad song of the angels who surround the everlasting throne, “blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.”

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Eph. v. 20.

Rev. vii. 12.

And he, like David, “will trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever,” as knowing, that to such “He is a strong rock and a fortress,” and that “none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.” In affliction, in poverty, in pain, in temptation, let come on him what will, still will he feel the pious confidence of the patient man of old, “though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” And he knows that he may do so, for Christ’s apostle has counselled him to “cast all his care upon God, for He careth for us;” and Christ Himself has said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” And he will accept the gracious invitation of Him, who has said to all His afflicted children, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”

Ps. lii. 8.
Ps. lxxi.
3. 7.
Ps. xxxiv.
22.
Prov. xxix.
25.

Job xiii. 15.

Heb. xiii. 5.
Isa. xlix. 15.

Ps. l. 15.
cvii. 6.

And, if the consciousness of weakness and unworthiness should press heavily and painfully upon the soul, then steps in the comforting assurance of God Himself, “him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.”

John vi. 37.

And he will honour God’s holy name;—regarding it as a name to pray by,—a name to revere,—a name to bless,—not to use lightly or unadvisedly, still less in mockery or sport. He will abide by the Apostle’s counsel, taking care “that the name of God be not blasphemed.” Whilst he “receives with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save his soul,” he will understand that he best honours that precious reve-

1 Tim. vi. 1.

LECTURE lation from on high, by shewing that he is a "doer of the word, ^{XXXV.} not a hearer only, deceiving his ownself." And so He will ^{James i. 21,} strive to serve Him, not saying only, "Lord, Lord," but ^{22.} ^{Matt. vii. 21.} "doing the will of his Father which is in heaven." The Christian's service is one of truth: not permitting him to pick and choose his points of obedience, not allowing him to serve his Lord by halves, nor to make any compromise between God and mammon. And it is a reasonable service,—the surrender of every thought, and wish, and will, as a sacrifice to Him, who has encouraged His faithful servants with the endearing appellation of friends; "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

And it will be an open service; not denying Christ before men, by the affectation of indifference to His will, nor from the fear of ridicule or worldly loss. The Christian's boldness, in avowing the burden of his Master's yoke, will be even as that of the Jewish leader Joshua. Like him, he will appeal to others,—“fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and truth.” Like him, he will avow his own allegiance,—“Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Josh. xxiv.
14, 15.

LECTURE XXXVI.

Commandment F.

EXODUS XX. 3.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.”

REMEMBERING the peculiar circumstances under which the decalogue was given to the Jews, it may, at first sight, seem strange to us, to find this commandment standing at the head of those revelations, which pointed out to them their duty towards their God. They had seen the power of Jehovah exerted so visibly in their behalf, that one would think it an utter impossibility for them to have felt the temptation, to have any other god before Him. They had seen the wizards of Egypt baffled before that mighty prophet, who came from God as their commissioned deliverer. They had seen plague after plague consume that devoted land, yet leave unharmed the little spot, in which they themselves had dwelt. The Lord had gone before them, upon their departure, “by day, in a pillar of a cloud to lead them the way; and by night, in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”

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XXXVI.

Ex. xiii. 21,
22.

The sea had parted her waters, and had become a refuge to them from their pursuers; “and the children of Israel” had gone “into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.” They had seen the waves roll back again to overwhelm the hosts of Egypt, and they beheld the corpses of their enemies flung upon the shore. They had joined with Moses in his song of thanksgiving to the Lord, who thus had “triumphed gloriously.” They too had said with him, “Thy

Ex. xiv. 22.

Ex. xv. 1.

LECTURE right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; Thy right
 XXXVI. hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the
 greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that
 rose up against Thee: Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which

Ex. xv. 6, 7. consumed them as stubble."

Ib. 25. The bitter waters of Marah had been sweetened for them;
 Ex. xvi. 13, bread from heaven had been showered down to satisfy their
 14. hunger; water had gushed from the stony rock to quench
 Ex. xvii. 6. their thirst; Amalek, a warlike people, had been discomfited
 Ib. 13. before them; and they were but now untaught and undisciplined slaves: so they could not but see, that the Lord had indeed fought for Israel, and fulfilled the promises that He had made to them by Moses, before their departure from the land of their captivity.

Is it possible then, one might be tempted to ask, that there was any absolute need of reminding such a people of the duty that they owed to this their God, or of warning them to have no other gods before Him?—Let us see.

A great change had taken place in the religious opinions of the Egyptians, as well as in the political situation of the Israelites, since the settling of Jacob and his family in the land of Goshen. It seems probable that, in the days of Joseph, the reigning monarch had at least a partial knowledge of the one true God: and we may fairly suppose, that even their priests were, to a certain extent, free from that gross idolatry and those abominable practices, which Scripture tells us prevailed amongst them in the days of Moses; for we can hardly imagine, that the pious and faithful Joseph would have married the daughter of an idolater, in the proper sense of the word¹.

¹ "There is one circumstance in the lives of Joseph and Moses, which appears somewhat singular. Joseph, whose character is conspicuous for an exemplary attachment to his religion, marries Asenath, daughter of Potipherah, priest of On or Heliopolis; whose name, according to Jablonski, designated his office, as the *High Priest of the Sun*. Yet Abraham had been called from Ur of the Chaldees, where the worship of fire had been established. In the same manner, Moses allied himself to Zipporah, daughter of Jethro, a Midianitish priest. The only method by which we can reconcile these conflicting circumstances, is by supposing, as in the instance of Job, that Potipherah and Jethro belonged to the ancient patriarchal system, in many points corresponding with that of the Israelites before the delivery of the law." Wait's *Oriental Antiquities*, p. 236.

How different is the humble submission of the first Pharaoh, LECTURE XXXVI.
 from the infidel defiance of that new king “which knew not Joseph,”—“who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to
 let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” Ex. i. 8.
 And we can well conceive, that the people would take Ex. v. 2.
 their tone from the language of the court, and practise the self-
 same enormities and idolatries which were put before them, in
 the example of their more educated and polished superiors.
 The children of Israel had not only been the witnesses of this
 gradual corruption, for several generations, until the oldest
 man amongst them could not recollect the period when Egypt
 was without her false gods,—but from freemen they had
 become slaves; slaves to idolaters: and, as such, too probably
 for the most part uninformed in mind, and certainly debased
 in feeling;—how debased, let their own complaints testify,
 when they shewed their indifference to liberty, if accompanied
 by partial privations. “Would to God,” was their cry to
 their leaders, “we had died by the hand of the Lord in the
 land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we
 did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into
 this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” Ex. xvi. 3.
 To these two causes, then, the constant acquaintance with
 idolatry, and the moral degradation which was the natural
 consequence of their enslavement, we may surely trace much
 of the backsliding, the mistrust, the stiff-neckedness, and im-
 morality of the children of Israel; and as surely, to a know-
 ledge of these workings of the heart, produced by such un-
 happy circumstances, we may, without presumption, ascribe
 the Lord’s frequent pardon of His rebellious people, His long-
 suffering, His remonstrances, His forbearance, His unwilling-
 ness to be extreme to mark what is done amiss. And we are
 to bear these circumstances in mind, in accounting for the
 delivery of the first commandment to a people who, if we
 were to confine our observation to the opportunities that they
 had of witnessing Jehovah’s supremacy, would seem to have
 had but little temptation to break it.

But further, it was not only that the children of Israel, at
 this period of their history, had been accustomed, from their
 earliest infancy, to the sight of a singularly intellectual peo-
 ple (for such were the Egyptians) bowing down before “gods

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1 Cor. viii. 5.

many, and lords many ;” but they were going to a land where they were to stand alone, as an isolated nation planted in the midst of idolatrous neighbours, and therefore more peculiarly exposed to the danger of sinning in this respect. Most merciful, then, was their ever-compassionate God, at the very outset of His revelation, to warn them of the danger and the sin of copying the example of those, by whom they were soon to be surrounded ; or of conforming to the vicious practices of the land that they had left. How needful withal was this caution, the slightest investigation of the subsequent history of the Jews will prove ! And solemn is the warning to

1 Cor. x. 11. us, for whose admonition these things are written, when we see God’s chosen, rescued, counselled people, yielding to every temptation, plunging headlong into every abomination of idolatry, courting the Baals and Ashtaroths of those around them, and, like the Gentiles of a later day, “giving themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”

Eph. iv. 19.

“But how,” may the Christian ask, “how does this commandment apply to me? I am in no danger of setting other gods before me than the Lord Jehovah. I know whom I serve,—the God, who hath created all things, visible and invisible ; the God, who died on the cross for my redemption ; the God, who, on the day of Pentecost, manifested His presence in cloven tongues of fire, and now enshrines Himself within the lowly Christian’s heart. This is my God,” he may say, “I know no other, I serve no other, I love no other ; ‘I have waited for Him, and He will save me ; this is the Lord ; I have waited for Him, I will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.’”

Isai. xxv. 9.

1 Cor. x. 12.

“Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”

We have our Saviour’s authority for declaring, that it is not enough to say, “Lord, Lord,”—not enough to make professions of love and obedience to that Lord ; but, as the practice is the real interpreter of the feelings, our daily conversation must so prove the sincerity of our profession, as to leave no doubt, of our being truly desirous to do the “will of our Father which is in heaven.” It is true, that the groves and the high places are gone, wherein the Israelites of old bowed down before the false gods of the Syrian and the Philistine :

Matt. vii. 21.

true, that the huge mis-shapen idols of our heathen forefathers are no more. It is true, that the temper, and feeling, and intelligence of the age, each and all proclaim war against open atheism, and render the worship of any other God save one, in the ordinary sense of the word, impossible. LECTURE XXXVI.

But there is an idolatry of the heart, that no laws can reach,—an infidelity of the spirit, that no opinion can check: and to this, beyond all question, does the first commandment extend; and against this would the compassionate voice of the Almighty warn us in the words, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” Our fathers knew not Christ; they worshipped objects which ministered to their earthly comfort,—the sun, the moon, the stars. To us Christ has been preached; and, with all our boast of superior intelligence, with all our acknowledgment of fealty to Him who has purchased us with His own agony and blood, we worship objects, which minister to our disquiet here, and ensure our soul’s jeopardy, if not its misery, hereafter: we worship money, ambition, lust, pleasure, the world’s opinion, self; and so, in reality, worship “gods many, and lords many,” although in theory we may assent to the Scriptural declaration, that “to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.” Well may we add, in the language of the Apostle, “Howbeit, there is not in every man that knowledge!” 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

Ib. 7.

How often are we to be taught and told, that any thing is to us a god, which usurps that place in our hearts, which the Lord Jehovah should have in undisturbed supremacy, any thing an object of false worship, which occupies more of our affection, claims more of our thoughts, engrosses more of our hopes, acts more upon our fears, than He does? Have we forgotten, in our false dream of security, that the Apostle Paul has called covetousness idolatry; and warned us against those, “whose God is their belly,” and who, according to the self-same testimony, are the “enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction,” “whose glory is in their shame?”—and wherefore? because “they mind earthly things.” Col. iii. 5.

Phil. iii. 19.

But it is not only the covetous man, whose whole soul is engrossed by that love of money, which is the root of all 1 Tim. vi. 10.

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XXXVI. evil; not only the sensualist, the drunkard, the fornicator, with whom the master-thought is the indulgence of the master-passion; not only the man who lives "without God in the world," that is in danger of breaking this commandment. Eph. ii. 12. There is a more covert peril.

We hear and see correct worldly conduct, upright integrity, honest morality, commended and respected, until we are too often tempted to forget, that morality is not religion, except it be founded upon Christian principle: and that, in truth, we may be serving the opinion of the world, the dictates of fashion, the conventional rules of society, at the very time when we are deceiving ourselves with the notion, that we are serving God, and God alone.

It were almost impossible to mark every case, in which the nominal Christian is an unconscious idolater. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that there are thousands upon thousands, who, in reality, pay less regard to the revelations of God, than to the opinions of men; who are less anxious to ascertain what may be God's mind upon this or that subject, this or that line of policy, than to be satisfied as to what is expedient, what is profitable, what is in unison with the temper, the habits, and the feelings of the day.

Are we yet to learn, that there are multitudes of so called Christians, who are content, if one day in the week be partially devoted to the service of their God; satisfied, if the thoughts of their immortal destiny be suffered to blend themselves with the calculations of science, the wilderness of politics, or the speculations upon worldly business? Strange occupations for one who professes himself to be a "miserable sinner;"—one called upon to "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling;" "to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" to "give all diligence to make his calling and election sure;" "to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord;" to "know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and to be made conformable unto His death; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead!" Strange occupations indeed!—thoughts of heaven and dreams of hell chasing one another, like the waves of the restless ocean;—a perpetual striving to make concord between

Phil. ii. 12.
Phil. iii. 14.
2 Pet. i. 10.
Phil. iii. 8.
Phil. iii. 10, 11.

Christ and Belial; to establish a compromise between God and mammon;—the house of God succeeded by the house of revelry, the supplication for pardon and peace followed closely by fashionable or licentious trifling;—the Bible and the newspaper, the Prayer Book and the pamphlet, the sermon and the novel, claiming by turns, even on God's holy day of rest, his meditations or his arguments! It were well for him who has been incorporated by baptism into the fold of Christ, to pause and see, whether these contradictory occupations are compatible with the due performance of his baptismal vow: well to ascertain, how far they are in accordance with his stirring titles of "member of Christ, child of God, inheritor of the kingdom of heaven:" well to see, how much or how little of idolatry is here; whether or not he does, to all practical purposes, bow down before other gods than the Lord Jehovah, his everlasting strength. Let us know, then, whom to love, whom to fear, whom to serve. "I, even I," saith the Lord God, "am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?" We shall do well to draw the moral consequences from these words. They shew us, how charged with blessings is an unshaken faith in the power and mercies of our God; how approved by Him, a fearless discharge of our Christian duty upon Christian principle. They convey to us the assurance of God's protection, if we suffer no creature, no passion, no sin, to be His rival in our hearts and our affections. If we are true to Him, God has pledged Himself to be true to us.

LECTURE
XXXVI.Isai. li. 12,
13.

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Commandment II.

EXODUS xx. 4, 5.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image :—Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.”

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HAD the children of Israel been unaccustomed to the sight of idol worship in the land of their captivity, and simply known, that the Egyptians did not acknowledge the God of the Hebrews,—so far as we can see, it would have been sufficient to have forbidden them to adore any false god, or, at the most, to have said, “thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image to worship it.” But as they had seen, amongst other abominations, the Egyptians bow down in adoration before the emblems of the celestial bodies, in the “heaven above;” before the ox, in the “earth beneath;” and the crocodile, in the “waters under the earth:”—so, in consequence, we may conclude, that the commandment was extended, and the objects of prohibition distinctly marked out for their guidance. Intimately connected, then, as these two commandments are, there is this difference between them. The first forbids the acknowledgment of false gods universally; the second forbids the worship of idols in particular; prohibiting, thus, not only the setting up of any image, picture, or symbol, as a representation of the Deity; but also the erection of any thing, as a visible emblem of his invisible self.

As to the precise time at which idolatry commenced, the Scriptures are silent: and, since these are the only authentic sources of information, the question must be answered partly by conjecture. “There are not wanting good authorities for

supposing that idolatry was introduced by the posterity of Cain, long before the death of Adam; and even, as some have conjectured, by Cain himself. . . . The reason likewise that is assigned in Scripture, for God's destroying the old world, that 'the earth was corrupt before God,' and 'that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually,' seems to imply, not only a prodigious excess of moral depravity, but an absolute apostasy from the worship of the true God."

LECTURE
XXXVII.
Gen. vi.
5. 11.
Van Mil-
dert's
Boyle
Lectures,
s. ii. vol. i.
p. 32.

At all events it seems little short of certain, that the tremendous visitation of the deluge checked only for a while, but did not destroy, the propensity to erect the material symbol of the Invisible. There was still the desire to have something presented to their very eyes, as a divinity; still the determination, in short, not to "worship God in spirit and in truth." "Ancient authors relate, that Ham and his posterity soon departed from the faith of the righteous patriarch, and in the true spirit of rebels, as well as apostates, sought to render themselves terrible to the worshippers of the true God, by associating together, and laying the foundation of a mighty empire, to be erected on the basis of idolatry and atheism." Id. p. 33, 34. But God is not mocked, nor defied with impunity; and the confusion of tongues at the building of the tower of Babel, and the consequent division of the people into different bodies, and their dispersion into different lands, was a signal instance of Divine justice inflicted upon wilful and avowed rebellion. From this time, the progress of idolatry seems to have been singularly rapid; and though it can hardly be supposed, but that there were many who still clung to the faith in Jehovah, which Noah would have peculiar powers of impressing, as speaking from his own personal experience of His mercy and His justice,—yet the patriarch had not descended to the grave, before idolatry appears to have been engrafted upon that faith, even amongst some of the most favoured of his descendants. Abraham was born two years after the death of Noah, three hundred and fifty-two after the flood; and Joshua tells us, that even at this early period, his father Terah and all his family were idolaters. It required an especial revelation from God, to bring them back to the simplicity of patriarchal worship;—a revelation, which does not seem to have

Josh. xxiv.
2.

LECTURE XXXVII. been extended to every member of the family ; since we find that Laban, the father-in-law of Jacob, had his images, which shared his affections, if not his devotions, with his rightful God.

Gen. xxxi.
19. 30. 32.

Lecture xiv.
p. 151.

See, on devil
worship,
Burder's
Oriental
Cust. c. xx.
p. 392.

It is not difficult to understand the causes that gave an impetus to idolatrous worship after the flood. When the confusion of tongues at Babel compelled those, who were there assembled in open rebellion against God, to choose new leaders and to disperse in quest of new settlements, we can well imagine, that when the *love* of God was manifestly absent, the *knowledge* of God would speedily disappear. Yet the history of every nation, whether in a civilized or savage state, has proved to us, that a sense of dependence upon some superior power is a very principle of our nature. Man cannot do without some god : the light of reason will tell him that there must be some mysterious author of good, some unseen agent of ill ; and hence, the main deviations from true religious knowledge have taken one of these two courses, either to court the good will of the former, or to propitiate the anger of the latter. There is, moreover, an innate reluctance in the natural man to walk by faith : he prefers to trust to sight ; he desires to have something for his god that he can see ; something to which he can point : and it was perfectly natural, that, in their ignorance of truth, they should turn their first attention to those objects, the benefits of which they could at once appreciate and understand. Hence the sun, as the giver of light and the promoter of vegetation ; the moon, the stars, each and all instrumental, more or less, to human blessings, appear to have been the earliest objects of adoration. And certainly, God as revealed to them once clean forgotten, nothing was more likely to inspire the mingled feelings of awe, and gratitude, and veneration. So too, in course of time, the restless eagerness of man, to invent something new, led him gradually to look, first with reverence, and then with adoration, upon other objects, the benefits of which he would feel, but the peculiar laws and properties of which were beyond his reach. The elements came in for their share of worship,—first, as abstract qualities ; next, under the disguise of emblems and symbols. The earth, the air, the water, shared their devotions with the hosts of heaven.

To the same principle we must refer that very common practice among the Gentiles, of worshipping their deceased leaders, lawgivers, or benefactors. Gratitude, in the first instance, would induce them to raise up some memorial of the benefits that they had received at their hands: and so, in a succeeding age, superstition, going hand in hand with ignorance (both fostered by the selfish pride which would covet the like honours for itself), would induce the unlettered to mistake the shadow for the substance, and to pay divine honours to the emblem, the statue, the pillar, or the memorial. But "Egypt, the chief seat of ancient wisdom and policy, of arts and letters, introduced objects of worship, still more grovelling and base than any which had preceded. In some instances, the policy of its kings led them to encourage the preservation of those animals, whose labours they employed in cultivating the earth, or whose useful activity they saw exerted in destroying the venomous reptiles and destructive animals, by which they were infested. For this purpose, they sanctified them as emblematic of some divinity, or even worshipped them, as in themselves divine; while, on the other hand, the Egyptian priests, with an affectation of mysterious wisdom, expressed the attributes of God, the operations of the elements, the motions and influences of the heavenly bodies, the rising and falling of the Nile, and its effects, by symbolical representations derived from the known and familiar properties of animals, and even vegetables. Hence these became, first, representations of their divinities, and, afterwards, the direct objects of divine reverence. Thus man was taught to bow down to birds, and beasts, and creeping things, to plants and herbs, to stocks and stones. Nothing was too base for grovelling superstition to adore; the heavens, the earth, the air, the sea, each hill, each river, each wood, was peopled with imaginary deities; every nation, every city, every family, had its peculiar guardian gods. The name and reverence of the supreme Father of the universe was banished from the earth; or, if remembered at all, men scrupled not to associate with Him their basest idols; and, deeming Him too exalted and remote to regard human affairs, they looked to these idols as the immediate authors of evil and of good; they judged of their power by comparing the degrees of prosperity their

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Graves on
the Penta-
teuch,
quoted in
Horne's
Introduct.
vol. iii.
p. iii.
c. 6. s. 1.

worshippers enjoyed. Was one nation or family more successful than another, their guardian gods were adopted by their rivals; and every day extended more widely this intercommunion of folly and of blasphemy." The merciful object, then, of this commandment is not to be mistaken. It was God's solemn protest against idolatry, as the most flagrant act of rebellion against His spiritual providence. It was God's solemn warning to the Israelite, that he, as His chosen one, should not commit the like; that he, brought into covenant with his Maker, incorporated into His family, instructed in His will and word, should never have to say, that he was ignorant of the sin and the wages of idolatry. The need of such a warning may (as in the case of the first commandment) be best seen, by ascertaining the manner in which they regarded it.

The ten commandments had been delivered by the lips of Moses to the people, amidst the most awful manifestations of God's immediate presence. They had been, subsequently, specially warned in the following words, "Ye shall not make with Me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold." They had been further instructed as to their future conduct in this respect, when they should enter into the promised land: "Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images." And the reason of this prohibition, as well as the certain consequences of disobedience, had been fairly put before them. "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against Me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to thee."

After this solemn declaration on the part of God, Moses was called into the mount, in the sight and hearing of the people, to listen to His further instructions, and to receive the "tables of stone," the law and the commandments which Jehovah had written. "And Moses was in the mount forty days, and forty nights." The people were impatient at his absence; and too hastily concluded, that their prophet-leader had been taken from them, never to return, and that God had now left them to their own guidance. "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the

Ex. xx. 1—
21.

1b. 23.

Ex. xxiii.
24.

Ib. 32, 33.

people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us ; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.”

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Ex. xxxii. 1.

In an evil hour, and evidently partaking of their want of faith, Aaron consented, and the golden calf was made. In the selection of this animal, they were doubtless guided by the remembrance of the divine honours paid to the Egyptian god Apis, under the emblem of the calf. It is important to bear in mind the light in which the Israelites regarded this idol. We cannot suppose that, when they said, “These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,” they meant to avow their belief, that the molten calf, which Aaron had made before their very eyes out of their jewels and their ornaments, was actually the God who had so signally delivered them,—with whose power they had been so long conversant,—whose terror they had so recently beheld,—whose awful words but now had wrought such dread within them, that they were constrained to say to Moses, “Speak thou with us, and we will hear : but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” They were resolved to have, as other nations had, an emblem to put them in mind of God ; something that might appeal to the senses, as a representation of Him “whom no man hath seen, nor can see.” They had their own way—and they suffered for it.

Ib. 4.
Ex. xx. 19.

1 Tim. vi. 16.

Notwithstanding the fearful visitation which fell upon the people, in consequence of this act of wilful rebellion, we find them yielding again to the self-same temptation, towards the close of their sojourning in the wilderness. “Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor,” “and the people did eat, and bowed down to the gods” of Moab ; and there died, in the plague that ensued, twenty-four thousand. In spite of the many warnings and threats, of national and individual punishment, denounced against the idolaters, a love for disobedience in this respect seems, for centuries, to have entered into the very genius of the Hebrew people. Scarcely had the first generation which entered into Canaan been gathered to their fathers, when “there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the

Num. xxv. 1. 9.

Josh. xxiv. 20.
Deut. xvii. 2—5.

LECTURE
XXXVII.Judges ii.
10—13.Judges xvii.
6.2 Chron.
xv. 3.

sight of the Lord, and served Baalim. And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth." And such, at intervals, appears to have been the melancholy condition of Israel during the time of the Judges. "In those days, every man did that which was right in his own eyes:" for a long season Israel was "without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law."

"Under the government of Samuel, Saul, and David, the worship of God seems to have been purer than in former times: there was indeed a corruption and irregularity very visible in their manners, but fewer complaints of idolatry were made than at other times.

1 Kings xi.
5—8.Horne's
Introd.
vol. iii.
p. 335.

"Solomon is the first king who, out of complaisance to the strange women he had married, caused temples to be erected in honour of their gods; and did so far impiously comply with them himself, as to offer incense to these false deities. So fatal an evil is lust to the best understandings, which besots every one it overcomes, and reigns over them with uncontrolled power!"

1 Kings xii
28.

But it remained for him, who is known in Scripture by the appalling title of "the man who made Israel to sin,"—it remained for Jeroboam to establish idolatry as the national religion; and so, at once, to transfer the allegiance of his subjects from Jehovah in spirit, to the graven image, as His presumed representative. It remained for him, to establish the golden calves at the extremities of his kingdom, Dan and Bethel; and to repeat the blasphemy, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." The tares were sown in a congenial soil; and the readiness with which the children of Israel fell into this subtle monarch's policy, to prevent them from going up to Jerusalem to worship, and so to run the risk of being won back to the dominion of Rehoboam, is a melancholy proof of their utter want of faith and love. "Idolatry being thus established in Israel by public authority, and countenanced by all their princes, was universally adopted by the people, notwith-

standing all the remonstrances against it by the prophets, whom God sent to reclaim them, from time to time, and who stood as a barrier against this growing wickedness, regardless of all the persecutions of impious Jezebel, who did what she could quite to extinguish the worship of the true God. At length this brought a flood of calamities upon that kingdom, and was the source of all the evils with which that people was afterwards afflicted; so that after a continual scene of tragical deaths, civil wars, and judgments of various kinds, they were at length carried away captive by Shalmanezzer into Assyria.”

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Horne ut
supra, p. 336.

And there were not wanting examples amongst the kings of Judah, of those who, like Ahaz, “walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim;” examples, which prove to us at once the long-suffering of God, and the gross impiety of those who professed themselves His servants. But God’s word came home to them, as well as to their sinning brethren of Israel: and, in their seventy years’ Babylonian captivity, they seem to have undergone the lesson of centuries; for, from the period of their return, we not only hear of no repetition of their former abominations, but we read of an abhorrence of idolatry so deep, that even the ruthless Pilate quailed before the tempest of indignation, which his attempt to introduce images into Jerusalem conjured up. And, at a subsequent period, when Petronius the governor of Syria endeavoured to bring the statue of the Roman Emperor Caligula into the temple, the Jews “with one voice declared their stedfast and deliberate resolution to sacrifice their lives, rather than consent to the profanation of their temple. Petronius sternly rebuked them, and insisted on his own obligation to fulfil the positive commands of his sovereign. They answered, that they were as much bound to respect the ordinances of their God,—that no fear of death would induce them to the violation of their law,—that they dreaded the wrath of their God, more than that of the emperor.”

2 Chron.
xxviii. 2.

Joseph.
Antiq. xviii.
3. s. 1.
de Bell. Jud.
ii. 9. 2. 3.
Burton’s
Lectures on
Eecl. Hist.
I. i.
vol. i. p. 13.

Milman’s
Hist. of the
Jews, b. xii.
p. 180.

It were well for the fame of Christ’s holy Catholic Church, if every branch of it had been careful to attend to the Divine commands in this respect; to listen to the voice of the Apostle Paul, who spoke with holy joy of his Thessalonian converts, in that they had become ensamples to the believers, and had “turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God;”

1 Thess. i. 9.

LECTURE and to enter into the true spirit of St. John's affectionate
XXXVII. counsel, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

1 John v.
21.

1 Cor. x. 14.

In the primitive Church, the abhorrence of every approach to idolatry was akin to the Jewish detestation of it in the latter periods of their history; and, for many years, the Christian world was undefiled by any approach to the abominations of paganism. "Images," says Bp. Tomline, "seem to have been introduced into churches in the fifth century¹; and it was probably first done to preserve the remembrance, and do honour to the memory, of departed saints, though some have imagined it originated in a wish to comply with the prejudices of the heathen, and to make them better disposed to embrace the Gospel. It was impossible to look at these interesting representations, standing in places consecrated to the service of God, without feeling some degree of respect; that respect was gradually heightened into reverence, and at last ended in absolute worship: so that Christians, who, in the first ages, were reproached by the heathen for not having images, were in the seventh century accused by the Jews, and even by Mahometans, of the grossest idolatry. In the following century began the famous controversy about breaking of images, which was carried on for more than a hundred years with the greatest eagerness and animosity, both in the East and in the West. Different popes and different councils, notwithstanding their pretensions to infallibility, espoused different sides of the question: but at length, after much uncertainty and fluctuation of opposite interests, those who contended for the lawfulness of worshipping images prevailed, and from that time image-worship has been an established doctrine of the Church of Rome."

Tomline,
Art. xxii.
360. See
also Van
Mildert's
Boyle Lect.
Serm. vii.
vol. i. p. 224.

But let the Church of Rome speak for herself; and give

¹ "About the latter end of the fourth century," according to Bingham, "pictures of saints and martyrs began to creep into churches. Paulinus, bishop of Nola, to keep the country people employed, and prevent their running into riot and excess, when they met together to celebrate the anniversary festival of the dedication of the church of St. Felix, ordered the church to be painted with the images of saints, and scriptural histories, such as those of Esther, and Job, and Tobit, and Judith, as he himself acquaints us in his writings." Bingham's *Eccles. Antiq.* b. viii. c. 8. s. 7. See also August. *contr. Faust.* L. xxii. c. 73. *Id. de consens. Evangel.* L. i. c. 10. *Id. de Morib. Eccles. Cathol.* L. i. c. 34 (cited in Bingham).

her own interpretation of the reasons, why she advocates the erection and veneration of images in her churches. "I most firmly declare," is the language of the ninth Article of the Creed of Pope Pius IV., "that the images of Christ and of the ever-Virgin Mother of God, as also of the other saints, are to be had and retained; and that due honour and veneration are to be shewn to them." "Not," as she declares in the twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent, "not that there is in them any divinity, or virtue, on the score of which they are to be worshipped; but because the honour which is paid to them is referred to the prototypes which they represent, so that through the medium of the image which we embrace, and before which we uncover the head and bow, we may adore Christ²."

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See the
Creed, in
Marsh's
Comparative
View,
c. vi. p. 125.

Concil. Trid.
Sess. xxv.
præf. de
invoc. imag.
Catechism.
ad Parochos.
p. 3. c. ii.
s. 24.
Catechism.
ad Ordin.
in loc. p. 3.
c. 2.

Some such explanation of their conduct would the children of Israel have given at Horeb. They, doubtless, would have said, "We place no faith in the image, as an image; but we adore Jehovah through this His emblem and representation: to Him we pay the real honour, to the image we pay the outward respect." It is not ours to deal forth upon our fellows the anathemas of Almighty wrath: "To Me belongeth vengeance, and recompense," saith the Lord; "their foot shall slide in due time." But when, throughout the whole of the Old and New Testament, we see God's mind so clearly declared, that He will have no representation, even of Himself, set up as an object of worship; when we see too, that, throughout the whole of the Jewish polity, their defiance of this prohibition was looked upon as an act of wilful rebellion and blasphemous apostasy;—are we to suppose, that the mind of God is so essentially altered, as to approve, in the Christian, that which He condemned and punished in the Jew? The Apostles, as we have seen, did not think so: the primitive Church did not think so. We may well be content to think and act with them; and to ask, with St. Paul, "what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?"

Deut. xxxii.
35.
Orig. contr.
Cels. L. iii.
40, et
L. vii. 66.
Justin. Dial.
cum Try-
phone, 94.
Tertull. adv.
Marcion. iv.
c. 22.
Clem. Alex.
Pædag.
L. iii. c. 2.
Concil.
Elib. can.
36.
Laud's Con-
ference with
Fisher,
p. 233.
ed. 1839.
2 Cor. vi. 16.

It now remains to consider the conclusion of this com-

² Bellarmine's language is not so guarded. "Imagines Christi et Sanctorum venerandæ sunt, non solum per accidens vel improprie, sed etiam per se, et proprie, ita ut ipsæ terminent venerationem, ut in se considerantur, et non solum ut vicem gerunt exemplaris." Bellarm. de Imaginib. L. ii. c. 21.

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 mandment, in which God says, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."
 Exod. xx. 5.

See Hors-
 ley's Biblic.
 Crit. vol. iii.
 p. 162, 163.

There is an apparent harshness in this declaration, inconsistent with the general character of God's justice and forbearance. A slight examination may remove this difficulty. We are not to forget, that God is here rather describing the natural effect of the parents' idolatry upon their children, than putting forward any positive threat, on His own part, of punishing the unoffending offspring of sinful parents, for sins in which they had no share: and so the declaration becomes a tender expostulation, a merciful appeal to their feelings as parents, and not so much a denunciation of Almighty vengeance.

But, even if we take the extreme case, and regard it as a threat, it is consistent with the general tenor of God's Commandments.

The threat relates to the sin of idolatry alone; and, of course, the punishment was denounced only against the children of the idolater, who was confessedly a traitor to his God. Where is the injustice of this sentence? The man who is a traitor to his country is punished with death, his estates confiscated, his honours forfeited, and infamy the only inheritance bequeathed to his unoffending children. There are hundreds in this country at this moment suffering for the treasons of their forefathers,—aye, beyond the third and fourth generation,—and yet no one thinks the sentence harsh, which dooms them thus to suffer. Is treason, then, against human laws of more consequence than rebellion against God? Again,—this sentence was only meant to affect the interests of this life, as in the case of the several idolatrous families of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab: that it was never meant to affect the acceptance or salvation of individuals in a future life, is evident from other passages of Holy Writ. In the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel, the holy prophet is bidden to say, apparently in answer to some doubts of the Jews upon the subject, "When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all My statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die. The son shall not bear the

LECTURE
XXXVII.Ezek. xviii.
19, 20.

Rom. ii. 6.

John iii. 19.

Luke xviii.
13.

Ps. ii. 11.

Ex. xx. 6.

1 John iv. 8.

Deut. vii. 10.

iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." It is, one would think, impossible to misconceive these words. When God denounces punishment against any persons for the sins of others, we must understand by it some temporal or national calamity, in which the righteous and the wicked are often involved: but, when he declares that every man shall die for his own sin,—the reference is made to the punishment of sin in the next life, wherein none shall suffer for the sins of others, but, as the Apostle says, God "will render to every man according to his deeds."

When, then, the Christian reads the fearful tale of Israel's backslidings, and compares his own practices with theirs, let him not boast, in the spirit of the Pharisee, "God, I thank Thee that I am not," as were some of Thy chosen people, neglectful of Thy covenant, unmindful of Thy word, bowing down before the image, and refusing to acknowledge Thy spiritual and abiding presence; or even as some in these latter days, who repeat and defend the self-same errors,—who, though light be come into the world, love darkness rather than light. Still will, still must the humble Christian say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Still will he watch his own deceitful heart, lest, while the practice of idolatry be cast out, its evil spirit may remain unnoticed. He will rejoice, that it is given him to know, to love, to serve God as a Spirit: but he will "rejoice with trembling," fearing lest he may bow down before the idol of his lusts, his passions, or even of his affections; and so bring himself within the scope of the commandment. He will not forget that, though God is a God of tenderness, "shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Him, and keep His commandments;" though to us He has revealed Himself by the very name of "Love;" He has another name both to Jew and Christian,—the jealous God;—the God who will neither be trifled with, nor tempted,—the God who will not give laws clear as the sun at noonday, and suffer them to be broken with impunity,—the God who "repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them."

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Commandment III.

EXODUS XX. 7.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.”

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See, on vows,
Cyprian,
Treat. iii.
30. and on
swearing,
iii. 12, 13.
xi. 10.

THERE can be but little dispute as to the character of sins forbidden in this commandment : they may be summed up in one word,—profaneness. To this, as to the master sin, may be referred the perjury, the false vow, the unmindful prayer, the blasphemous oath ; each and all proceeding from an irreverent disregard to the awful name of God.

It is probable that, in the delivery of this commandment, a reference was made to the common custom of all heathen nations,—a custom, of which the Israelites doubtless had seen much during their sojourning in Egypt, and were likely to see more during their pilgrimage in the desert ; namely, that of invoking the names of their false gods upon every trifling occasion, and introducing them into their ordinary conversation. It was apparently to bring the Israelites up to a higher standard of reverence for divine things, to teach them the immeasurable distance between Jehovah the God of Israel and the deities of their idolatrous companions, that this commandment was given them. And it seems not to have been without its effect in restraining them from violating its letter, even if they did not in all cases adhere strictly to its spirit. From the earliest to the latest period of their history, the Jews not only forbore upon light and trivial occasions the use of that name of God, by which He revealed Himself to them, “Jehovah,”—but they even abstained entirely from its utterance. It was pronounced but once in the whole year ; and then by the high priest, in the celebration of the most solemn

service of the law, on the great day of atonement for the sins of the people. It was, when the priestly intercessor returned from the holy of holies within the veil, to proclaim forgiveness to the congregation, in the name of Jehovah. It is well known, that so great was the scruple of the Jew on this point, that, wherever the word Jehovah occurred in the sacred writings, they substituted another word for it; a reverential scruple, in which they have been followed by most Christian translators, ourselves included. They appear to have been averse to writing the name at all, "unless on very particular occasions, and to have substituted for it various abbreviations and devices; to some of which high mystical qualities have been assigned."

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Bible Cy-
clopædia,
Art. "Jeho-
vah."

They acknowledge that the true pronounciation of it is lost, and regard it as one of the mysteries to be revealed in the days of the Messiah. They hold, notwithstanding, that the knowledge of the name does exist on earth, and he, by whom the secret is acquired, has by virtue of it the powers of the world at his command; and they account for the miracles of our Saviour by telling us, that "He had got possession of the ineffable name." The Jews had good reason to attach a Ib. peculiar sanctity to this awful title of Jehovah. It was a name unknown to Abraham and Isaac, and first revealed to Moses, as the name by which He established His covenant with the children of Israel: the name under which, having selected them as His peculiar people, He promised to deliver them "from under the burdens of the Egyptians." To them, there-fore, it was not merely a solemn pledge of the Divine mercy and protection, but even a symbol of the accomplishment of both; and they looked upon it, in consequence, as a sacred trust committed to their keeping: its knowledge was the distinguishing privilege of their nation. It was engraven on a frontlet of gold, attached to the mitre of the high priest, in order that on solemn occasions it might be conspicuously presented to the assembled multitude, that they might thus preserve in their minds a constant impression of the relation in which they stood to the Maker of heaven and earth. When such, then, were the reasons which the Jew had to hallow the awful name of Jehovah, we shall cease to wonder at the scrupulous reverence with which they abstained from the very mention of it, through fear of unwittingly profaning it. The Ex. vi. 2—8.

LECTURE
XXXVIII.Matt. xxiii.
23.Jortin's
Sermons,
vol. iv.
s. 8. p. 100.
ed. 1809.

unbeliever may term this scruple one of fanaticism or superstition, but the really pious mind will appreciate the feeling that gave rise to it,—namely, a conviction, that an habitual veneration for the name of the Supreme Being is one of the surest tests of a really devotional mind, one of the strongest evidences of a godly spirit. It was at a period of their history when, our Saviour tells us, even their teachers “omitted the weightier matters of the law,” whilst they regarded the letter of it, that a habit of evading this commandment seems to have been prevalent among them. Jehovah’s name they would not,—dared not utter: still less did they use it as a witness to their every-day vows. But they would have their oath; and so “they took up a custom of swearing, not by the Lord, but by other things, by other objects of esteem and veneration; as by heaven, and earth, by the temple, and by the altar; and thus they thought to evade the commandment, and to indulge themselves in the practice of swearing, and even of forswearing, without incurring danger. Our Saviour condemned those evasive oaths; and told them, that to swear by the temple was the same thing as to swear by that God to whom the temple was consecrated, and that the breach of all such oaths was no better than perjury.”

Nor were the Jews singular in this fondness for a stronger form of asseveration than plain speech admits. In the polished conversation of Greece and Rome, in the exaggerated phraseology of the East, in the habits of modern Europe, there is the same propensity traceable: man will have something to swear by; and whether it be God’s awful name that he thus takes in vain, or, like the heathen of old time, invokes some pagan deity¹ as a supposed witness to his words,—in each and all cases, we can understand the merciful spirit in which our Saviour warned His disciples, against the indulgence of this irreverent habit. “I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne: nor by the earth, for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

Matt. v.
34—37.

¹ No oath is more common in Southern Italy than “Corpo di Bacco.”

The worst kind of breach of this commandment, as far as regards our intercourse with our fellow-creatures, namely perjury, is happily so universally detested, and so entirely confined to the desperately profligate, as to require but little comment to explain its nature, or to condemn its practice. It is a sin, from which even the profane in other respects would shrink, as from one that would infallibly cover them with infamy in the sight of man, as well as render them guilty in the sight of God. Few, therefore, are liable to the temptation of committing it.

But there is another violation of this command, which, in male society at least, is not only unvisited by that disgrace which *should* accompany every flagrant breach of God's laws, but is, unhappily, so much a thing of custom, as to pass almost always unproved, if not unnoticed; that is, the habit of irreverently using the name of God in common discourse, and of profane swearing. We are apt to boast of our superior intelligence to that of the Jew; but we have seen that he revered the name of God so perfectly, as entirely to abstain from its utterance. And we are apt to pride ourselves upon living under the liberty of the Gospel, and in being rescued from the yoke of the law:—Is therefore our liberty to degenerate into licence? and are we privileged to sin, because grace has abounded? Is the mind of Him, who “is not a man that he should repent,” so turned from its purpose, as to pass a sentence of death against the blaspheming Jew, whose relation to his God was that of a subject to his prince, and to pronounce a verdict of acquittal upon the blaspheming Christian, to whom his God appeals as to a son, rather than as to a servant? This very knowledge of our sonship should assure us, that it cannot be. The child who mocks at the counsel of an earthly parent, the child who would speak lightly of his honour, or shew an utter disregard of all respect due to him, would be held up as a warning, stigmatized (and justly) as a rebel against the laws of nature and of decency: we should stand aloof from him, and feel, that no blessing from on high could descend upon the head of one who rebelled against the author of his being. Does our God, then, claim or deserve less of our reverence, our watchfulness, or our duty? It would seem so; for many who call themselves

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XXXVIII.1 Sam. xv.
29.
Lev. xxiv.
16.

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Christians, and imagine, perhaps, that they have a fair title to the name, appear to think that they may insult their God with impunity,—dishonour Him without reproach,—blaspheme Him without crime.

What! and are we utterly to cast out of our remembrance the unseen presence of this mysterious Being, whose awful eye is ever bent upon our ways? are we entirely to forget that His ear is as open to the curse of the blasphemer, as to the prayer of the godly? Is He to be called upon, when the heart is merry and drunken, to witness our idle or profane assertions? Is it His name we would invoke, to give emphasis to the expression of these very passions which He abhors? Is it our God whom we would summon to strike us with His vengeance, if such or such a thing be not according to our words or opinions? Is it the dreadful name of the King of kings, the Lord of earth and heaven, which we would bandy from mouth to mouth, the point to every jest, the force of every sentence, yea, the companion of our idle talk, or still more idle ribaldry? Let not the Lord have to say of the Christian, as He did of the Jew of old, “My name continually every day is blasphemed.”

Isai. lii. 5.

The name of God is left us here to pray by,—to hope in,—to be the witness of truth, the judge of the heart, the avenger of perjury. It is the name, at which “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” The name which angels adore, at which the devils tremble, and in which every holy person of every age has believed, as the only “name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” It were worse than vain to think, that all this may be unhallowed with impunity. And it were indeed self-flattery to suppose, that such a habit can ever be found in a really devout and reverential mind.

Phil. ii. 10.

Acts iv. 12.

It would be difficult to find a more touching example of respect for holy things, and of the name of God in particular, than is given us by the writer of the sermon preached at the funeral of one, whose learning was only exceeded by his devotion, the illustrious philosopher Boyle. “He had,” says he, “the profoundest veneration for the great God of heaven and earth, that I have ever observed in any person. The very name of God was never mentioned by him, without a pause,

and a visible stop in his discourse; in which, one who knew him most particularly above twenty years has told me, that he was so exact, that he does not remember to have observed him once fail in it ²."

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Barnet's
Fun. Sermon.
Jebb's ed.
p. 354.

This was indeed to reverence his God; never to hear or pronounce that awful name, without feeling the unutterable majesty of the Godhead brought home to his thoughts. It is as if he beheld the cherubim veiling with their outstretched wings the ark of the Eternal, and feared, by word or deed, to profane the mercy seat of God.

We have seen what are our Saviour's injunctions on this subject. Of a similar character is the counsel of St. James; "Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." James v. 12. It was with no vague knowledge of the mind of Christ, and the infirmities of the human purpose, that he said withal, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity . . . it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell;—it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison: therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God." James iii. 6—9.

And what is the obedience that many, who call themselves Christians, will pay to the commands of Him, in whose name they have been baptized, and from whose word they profess to derive the only hope of their spiritual well-being here, and salvation in the world to come? Alas, let daily experience give the answer! So far from reining in the restive and unruly member, they give it, too many of them, the fullest licence that Satan can desire. Awful indeed are the subjects which they will handle in sport, in mockery, or even in calmness! Heaven and hell,—their Creator's and Redeemer's name, and attributes,—the vengeance of God upon themselves and others,—the torments of hell,—the misery of the damned,—how fearful is the catalogue! these are the thunders which they will toss about, saying with the deceiver of old, "Am not I in sport?" Prov. xxvi. 19.

These are the habits of some of the members of that fold

² See also Birch's life of Boyle prefixed to his works, p. 87, ed. 1744. There is a similar instance recorded of Newton in Bp. Jebb's *Correspondence*, with Knox, vol. i. p. 83.

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of Christ, whose guilt, without this addition, was so great, as to require that tremendous price which was paid for its redemption. These are amongst the presumed innocent and befitting diversions of those, who are addressed in Scripture as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;” whose offices are described in the self-same breath as being, to “shew forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

1 Pet. ii. 9.

It is a dreadful thing to think, how universal is this moral contamination! It spreads to every Christian land; and, in male society, it meets too commonly with but little rebuke, and gives still less scandal. The old man, just dropping into the grave, will all but blend his curses with his prayers;—the young man thinks a kind of masculine energy is hereby imparted to his discourse, and he must needs shew that, highly as he may pique himself upon his good breeding towards men, and culled and courtly as may be his speech to them, there is One, whom he is neither afraid nor ashamed to insult, One before whom any language may be uttered;—that one is his God! With the rich man, it is sometimes fashionable, sometimes a relief to ill-humour, sometimes a mode of making a command more decided and emphatic: any reason will serve as an apology. And the poor man too must have his oath. The parent will curse his child, upon the first trifle that offends him,—and the child will follow the example of the parent. Is there a city or a parish in the country, in the streets of which you may not hear, from almost infant lips, imprecations as tremendous as those which proceed from the lips of the most mature swearer? Alas! how often is it, that the parents, of the poor especially, think but little of the solemn truth, that their children are lent, rather than given them by God; lent, that they may train them up for eternity, as souls for which Christ died, and which the Holy Ghost is desirous to fill and sanctify. If this solemn duty be not recognized; but if, on the contrary, the child may date, not his first lessons in godliness, but in blasphemy, to a parent's example,—if to that, in after-life, he may truly trace a peculiar sinfulness of character, a peculiar bent to profane God's holy name, to break His sabbaths, to disregard His presence, to neglect His counsels,—let the profane parent solemnly remember, how

much of that child's evil will be charged to him in the great day of God's account !

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It is enough to have to answer for our own sins : awful indeed will be the reckoning, and agonizing the compunction, if, at the soul's last trial, there be but one to witness thus against us,—“this man first taught me to curse and to swear ; from him I first learnt to profane the name of God ; his were the lips from which I heard no prayer, but blasphemy and defiance ; his example I copied, his lessons I learnt.” How would this agony be increased to madness, if that witness were his own,—his child ! Profaneness is one of those sins, which grows insensibly into a confirmed habit ; and in nothing, perhaps, is the danger of yielding to the first temptation more apparent. The swearer begins, in early life most frequently, to do as those around him. Occasional and comparatively trifling breaches of that respect, which belongs to sacred things, are soon followed by more daring outrages ; until, at last, the habit is so confirmed, that its unhappy victim, so far from feeling compunction for his sin, will begin to justify it, on the score of its harmlessness. He means nothing by it, he will argue,—he has no deliberate intention of offending God, he will say ;—far from it,—he will declare, that he reverences Him at heart,—but that he really cannot see the sin in himself, or the mischief to others, in now or then uttering an oath or two. It is puritanical stiffness, he will say, to be so very nice about one's words ; and it can hardly be, that God will consign him to eternal perdition for mere slips of the tongue. Alas ! this is the deceitfulness of sin sporting with the understanding of its victims ! It is the work of Satan to tempt us to resort to sophistry and subterfuge, thus to palliate our working out his task. He is interested in teaching us to forget, that it is written, “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment :” and that the same divine lips have also said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away ; but my words shall not pass away.”

Matt. xii. 36.

Luke xxi.
33.

It has been often remarked, that this is the only sin, in which there is no advantage either proposed, or gained, beyond the mere fact of its commission. The glutton, the drunkard, the sensualist, all receive some kind of gratification from the indulgence of their several passions. A man is a miser, a

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robber, a murderer, for some individual profit, supposed or real. Not so with the blasphemer : he has not even the sorry end of selfishness to account for his sin. It would seem that there is no especial pleasure in profaneness ; for the words which compose a curse are surely not more palatable to the tongue, nor sweeter to the ear, than those which compose the blessing or the prayer. The sin, then, is the profit :—unless indeed we may look upon the advantage proposed and gained as the “vent to passion ;” the swearer’s common plea. He will argue, when hard pushed to find *some* excuse for his transgression, that when the temper is ruffled, and the mind put off its balance, there is a certain sort of relief in oaths and imprecations. So there is,—in one sense : in the same way, that the commission of any crime is a relief to the craving appetite that led to its commission. But it is no less sinful, *because* it is a relief. The murderer, when, in revenge for some conceived injury, he slays his victim, finds, for the moment, his passion sated by the deed. The fornicator, or the adulterer, feels the gratification of his lawless lust a certain sort of relief to his criminal desire. The thief, when master of his plunder, is satisfied for the time. The drunkard’s yearning for his accustomed indulgence is appeased, when he has reduced himself to the level of the brute. But no one would argue, that any of these crimes might be practised with innocence or impunity, merely because their commission was a relief to the overpowering passion ! The plea would be too absurd to be urged in human courts : why should it be supposed, that it would stand good before the bar of God’s tribunal, when put forth as the blasphemer’s justification ?

We may be told,—that this habit, when once formed, is exceedingly difficult to curb, still more so to abandon. It may be so ; but it is not therefore an impossibility. Daily experience proves to us, that a sense of decency, or a conviction of expediency, will check this and many other crimes, which are committed without scruple, when God alone can be offended by them. Where is the well-bred gentleman, who would utter imprecations when in the society of females ? Where is the man, who would dare to swear and to curse before those whose good opinion he is desirous to cultivate, when he knows that they would visit his oaths with prompt

and indignant rebuke? Where is the man, who would venture to blaspheme before his sovereign? And yet, before the King of kings, the thoughts and words alike are permitted to run riot! The curse, the blasphemy, the profane jest, the oath, may all be bandied from one lip to another, when no ear save that of the Everlasting can listen to their words,—when no eye save His unseen glance is fixed upon their deeds. Bold as may be the defiance before God,—before his earthly king, before the gentle female, the loudest blasphemer of them all is silent! There he is smooth-tongued and meekly spoken: the most courtly accents of polite language are studiously picked out, to suit the ear of man; the swearer gives the refuse only to his God!

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Of the awful spiritual state, in which the profaner of God's holy name must of necessity be,—but little need be said. It cannot be that he is "led by the Spirit of God;" therefore he is not "the child of God." It cannot be that he is filled with "the Spirit of Christ;" therefore "he is none of His." It cannot be that the spirit of profaneness and the Spirit of holiness can unite, as inmates of the same sanctuary,—therefore his body is not the "temple of the Holy Ghost," but rather the abode of that evil one who, lost himself, desires to make the same wreck of the immortal soul of man. Were he indeed the child of God, in that tender and holy sense in which the Apostles use the word, he would have in his heart both the love and the fear of the Most High: he would not speak lightly or irreverently of his spiritual Parent's name; he could not knowingly, or habitually, practise any sin whatever, still less with unconcern; because that new nature, which he has received through the grace of God, is holy in its desires, holy in its aims, holy in its conversation.

Rom. viii.
14.

1b. 19.

2 Cor. vi.
15, 16.

1 John v.
18.

It is not the profane man, (whose every word gives the lie to his Christian profession,) that can say with David, "I have remembered Thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept Thy law;" not he, who can take comfort in the hour of trial, either of body or of mind, from the prophet's stirring appeal: "who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the NAME of the LORD, and stay upon his God."

Ps. cxix. 55.

Isai. 1. 10.

LECTURE XXXIX.

Commandment IV.

EXODUS xx. 8.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

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XXXIX.

IT would be difficult, even for an unobservant reader of Jewish history, not to be struck with the singular pains which were taken by the leaders of that extraordinary people, to inculcate in them a jealous reverence for the institution of the Sabbath.

Ex. xxxi.
13, 14.

Isai. lvi. 2.

Amos viii. 5.

Ezek. xx.
11—13.

Lam. i. 7.

At one time we find God Himself not only saying, “Verily, My Sabbaths ye shall keep ; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout all your generations ;”—but declaring, “every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death : for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.” At another, He commissions His holy prophet to pronounce a blessing upon the man, who “keepeth the Sabbath-day from polluting it.” Now,—the inspired Amos sternly rebukes his ungodly countrymen for counting this day of privilege a day of weariness, a day whereon they were debarred from following after worldly schemes, and worldly profit. And then,—the sorrowful Ezekiel is bidden to declare, in the Lord’s name, that because His people despised His ordinances, and “greatly polluted” His Sabbaths, He would “pour out His fury upon them in the wilderness to consume them.” The threat was accomplished :—for when Jerusalem’s candlestick was removed, because of her iniquities, when her harp hung voiceless, and tuneless, beside the waters of Babylon, the captive prophet numbered it amongst her bitterest miseries, that her adversaries “did mock at her Sabbaths.” And it is a painful proof of the indisposition of man to take warning

even by God's heaviest dispensations, when we find, that at a later period, after the partial restoration of the Jews to their ancient privileges, their great reformer Nehemiah was compelled to remind them of their forgotten duty, and to ask them, "What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath-day? Did not your fathers thus? and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel, by profaning the Sabbath." LECTURE XXXIX
Neh. xiii.
17, 18.

But, strongly as this divine institution is fenced around by the stringent ordinances of the Levitical law,—and peculiar as were the ties that bound the Jew to hallow it, the appointment of every seventh day, as a season consecrated to God, and set apart more especially for His service, is coeval with the creation.

The Spirit of God had moved upon the face of the waters, and given substance to that which was without form and void;—Jehovah had said, "Let there be light; and there was light." The heavens and all their glorious luminaries were finished;—days and nights, years and seasons, had been appointed. The sea had known her limits, the earth her boundaries. Each bird, and fish, and beast,—yea, the very smallest creeping thing had received its destined properties and duties; and man, the Lord of all this goodly scene, had been led by his Creator to take possession of his inheritance. There was a solemn pause in the business of the creation. "God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." Gen. i. 3.
Ib. 81.

The corner-stone was laid: "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job xxxviii.
7.

It was the seventh day:—"and God blessed it, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." Thus "the first day of Adam's life, after his creation, was the Sabbath." Are we to suppose, then, that he who was made in the image of God, and taught his every point of duty by his Creator, was left in ignorance of this important institution? Can we believe, that he was permitted to choose his own times, and days, of prayer and of thanksgiving, as his fancy might direct, when, in all other things, he was confessedly under God's guidance? If we cannot but reject so improbable a theory,—then it is scarcely possible to avoid coming to the conclusion, that Adam con-

Gen. ii. 2.
Townson's
Disc. xxi.
p. 253.

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Gen. vii.
2—4; viii.
4. 10. 12;
xxix. 18;
xxxiii. 3;
xli. 2—27;
l. 10.

tinued to keep holy that day which God had sanctified, and taught his posterity (at least the descendants of Seth) to do the like. It would be difficult, again, to conceive, that those men of God, who were successively raised up as agents of the Divine will, were unacquainted with their Lord's desire, as it respected the manner and the time in which He was to be worshipped. And though, in the Scriptural accounts of the patriarchal ages, we cannot find any positive command to hallow the seventh day at this time, yet there was evidently a mysterious sanctity attached to the number "seven," for many generations previous to the delivery of the law.

Ex. xvi. 23.

We find it also incidentally noticed, that after their departure from Egypt,—before they arrived at Sinai, the Sabbath was no strange ordinance to the Jewish people. Surely, this intimation might warrant us in concluding, that the heaven-taught traditions of the patriarchs had not been entirely forgotten by the children of Israel, during their long sojourning in the land of their captivity, though there might have been serious difficulties in the way of their constantly acting upon them. It was in the wilderness of Sin, when Jehovah sent manna to His people, who, unmindful of the blessings of liberty, and disregarding the privilege of being manifestly in God's hand, remembered only the well-filled flesh-pots of Egypt. "To-morrow," Moses reminded them, "is the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the Lord." And when, notwithstanding the command of Moses to gather no manna upon the Sabbath-day, some few went out for that purpose, we find God asking them, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments, and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." "It is a gross mistake, then," remarks Bp. Horsley, "to consider the Sabbath as a mere festival of the Jewish Church, deriving its whole sanctity from the Levitical Law."

Ib. 28, 29.

Horsley's
Serm. xxii.
p. 205.
3rd ed.

After the establishment of that law, the observance of the Sabbath no longer remained as a traditionary obligation, handed down from father to son, through a long line of patriarchs;—but it was impressed upon the Israelites, as a portion of that eternal and inviolable code, which was the

express transcript of the Divine mind. Thus, before the law, LECTURE XXXIX.
 under the law, and (as we shall have occasion hereafter to see) since the law, we find God setting apart every seventh day, for His own honour, and for the rest, as well as the benefit of His creatures. Full as the Levitical code is of such injunctions to reverence the Sabbath, that the Jew could never plead ignorance either of their existence or their meaning; and priding themselves, as they did, upon the possession of that code, as an abiding evidence of their being God's peculiar people,—it is a melancholy proof of the stubbornness of the human heart, to read the many expostulations of the prophets with the people for their neglect, during many generations, of this one branch of the law.

They could not complain, that the mind of God was vaguely and dimly shadowed forth in His directions in this respect. They could not turn round upon the prophet, when he warned them of their peril and their sin, and say, “Doth he not speak parables?” What can be more intelligible than the Lord's words uttered to Moses, and by him repeated to the people? There is no ambiguity in this counsel: the wildest theorist of them all could not misinterpret it; the humblest intellect could not misunderstand it.

Ezek. xx.
49.
Ex. xxxi.
14—17.

But there is a merciful intention in the halo of reverence that was cast around the Sabbath, both with regard to the free-born Jew and his domestic slave, too clear to be mistaken. Whilst the former had, in the institution of the Sabbath, a constant memorial of his own redemption from slavery; and, in its ceremonial ordinances, an impassable line drawn between him and the idolater;—the latter was a partaker of the blessings resulting from both ordinances and institution. By the one, he too had the opportunity of knowing the God of Israel; by the other, he had the privilege of sharing in that rest from worldly toil, which was the leading feature of the Sabbath,—a privilege, of which even the brute creation partook; and it is to the honour of the Jew, that the remembrance of his own oppressions in Egypt, thus constantly brought before him, does not appear to have steeled his heart against the distresses that must ever accompany even the most modified form of slavery,—but rather to have taught him the salutary lesson, of mitigating them as far as possible.

Deut. v.
13—15.

See Horne's
Intro.
vol. iii.
p. 4. c. 5.
s. 2.

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Disregarded as were many of these ordinances previous to the captivity of the Jews,—it appears that, after their return from Babylon, they gradually became more cautious in violating this, and other portions of their ceremonial and ritual law. And though we find their ever watchful prophets noting and condemning each transgression as it arose, yet, on the whole, we may safely say, that national disgrace had not been without its use, in enforcing lessons of deeper reverence for holy things. Nay,—to such an extent did they afterwards carry their respect for this day, that, in the early part of the wars of the Maccabees, they refused even to defend themselves against their enemies on the Sabbath; “Let us die all in our innocency,” they said, “heaven and earth shall testify for us, that ye put us to death wrongfully.” Their foes took them at their word; and “they rose up against them in battle on the Sabbath, and they slew them, with their wives and children, and their cattle, to the number of a thousand people.”

1 Mac. ii.
32—38.

So too, at a later period, Ptolemy Soter, aware of the religious scruples of the people, (notwithstanding a resolution they previously made, to exercise *defensive* warfare on the Sabbath,) “entered Jerusalem on a Sabbath day, under pretence of offering sacrifice, and took possession of the city without resistance from the Jews, who did not on this occasion dare to transgress their law, by fighting on a Sabbath day.” In the time of Christ, it is evident from the narratives of the Evangelists, that there was more of formal superstition, than godly reverence, in their rigid observance of this day; and our Saviour, although He shewed a strict regard to the spirit of the ordinance, seems to have performed many of His most striking miracles on the seventh day, to impress upon them the great truth, that “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”

Tomline's
Theol.
p. 1. c. 3.
vol. i. p. 218.

Mark ii. 27.
See Hors-
ley's Serm.
xxi. p. 186.
3rd ed.

We have already seen, that the Sabbath, existing as it did as a divine institution from the first day that man came forth from his Creator's hands,—and continued throughout the patriarchal ages,—received, nevertheless, its solemn *ritual* consecration, when delivered to the Jews as a portion of the decalogue. But, because the ritual law is annulled, and the Christian is delivered from its bondage, he is not therefore delivered from the obligation to hallow one day in seven unto

the Lord. "The abrogation of the Mosaic law no more releases the worshippers of God from a rational observation of a Sabbath, than it cancels the injunction of filial piety, or the prohibitions of theft and murder, adultery, calumny, and avarice. The worship of the Christian Church is properly to be considered as a restoration of the patriarchal in its primitive simplicity and purity; and of the patriarchal worship, the Sabbath was the noblest, and, perhaps, the simplest rite."

LECTURE
XXXIX.Horsley,
ut supra,
p. 201.

It is well known, that, at the earliest possible period of the Christian Church, a change was made in the day on which the Sabbath was kept; and, from that time, the first day in the week, instead of the seventh, was set apart for God's especial service. It remains to ascertain the reason and authority of this change. It has been conjectured, that this is not the first change of the day, on which it was kept; but that, as the Jews were bidden to hallow the Sabbath, upon a principle different from that enjoined to the patriarchs, so Moses, at the command of God, altered the day, on which it was originally observed, to that on which the Israelites left the land of their captivity.

See Horsley,
ut supra,
p. 223.

The primary reason for thus hallowing the first day of the week, instead of the seventh, is to be found in a godly desire to commemorate that day on which Christ rose from the dead; the day, on which the Christian regards his deliverance from the powers of hell, and a worse than worldly bondage; the day, on which Christ made His first appearance to His disciples after His resurrection; the day, on which His most striking subsequent interviews with His chosen ones were held. This day was known in the primitive Church, by the same name which St. John applies to it,—“the Lord's day.” Nor is this the only motive for the Christian's desire to make this day his Sabbath. It was on this day that the promise of the Comforter was realized. It was on the first day of the week, on the Lord's day, that the Spirit of God alighted on the heads of the assembled Apostles, baptizing them, according to the prediction of John the Baptist, “with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” It was on this day that the holy warfare of the cross commenced, and the foundations were laid of a moral and spiritual revolution, to which the world has seen no parallel.

Rev. i. 10.

Matt. iii. 11.

LECTURE XXXIX. It was obviously needful, also, to make as wide a distinction as possible, between the ceremonial law and the free worship of the Gospel. We may fairly, then, conclude with Bishop Horsley, that, as by a strict observance of the ordinance of the Sabbath "the holy patriarchs, and the Jews their descendants, made, as it were, a public protestation once in every week against the errors of idolatry;" so, by transferring its observance from the seventh to the first day of the week, the Christian made a similar protestation against Judaism.

Horsley,
ut supra,
p. 224, 225.

See
Hooker's
Eccl. Pol.
b. v. c. 70.
s. 8.

And the authority is clear, under which the change was established. It was that of the Apostles, as evidenced by their practice: and, looking upon them as acting under the immediate instigation of the Spirit, we must recognize in their counsels (as did the Jews in the precepts of Moses) not the voice of man, but the authority of God. It was "on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread," that "Paul preached unto them." The first day of the week was that, on which he charged every one of them "to lay by him in store, as God had prospered him."

Acts xx. 7.

1 Cor. xvi. 2.

Ignat. ad
Magnes.
s. ix.

Clem. Alex.
Strom. 7.
s. 12.

See Bur-
ton's Lect.
viii. p. 237.

Thus we find, that it was not upon the Jewish Sabbath, but on the succeeding day, that the members of Churches founded by St. Paul met, for the purposes of public worship and instruction, for receiving the holy communion, and for collecting the alms of the devout for the sick and needy. Nor is the testimony of the early fathers of the Church wanting, to prove the same point. Ignatius, in his Epistle to the Magnesians, (in proof of their having attained to a new hope,) clearly looks upon it as a part of Christian duty, no longer to observe the Jewish Sabbath, but to lead a life in conformity with the Lord's day, in which our life rose again from the dead, through Him and through His death, "which some," adds the holy man, "deny." And Clement of Alexandria tells us what it is to lead a life in conformity with the Lord's day, namely, to cast out all bad thoughts, to cherish all goodness and knowledge, and to honour the resurrection of our Lord which took place on that day. In the second century we find the heathen name of Sunday applied to the Lord's day, even by Christian writers; mainly, it would seem, that the Gentiles should clearly understand what day of the week was

meant by the Lord's day. And the same writers, when exclusively addressing themselves to Christians, speak of it as the "Lord's day," to distinguish it from the Jewish Sabbath; for by the latter name it never was known in the primitive Church. It was also called "Dies Panis," the day of bread, from the custom, in the primitive Church, to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist on every Lord's day throughout the year: a custom so universally recognized, that they who came to church to hear the Scriptures read, and stayed not to join in the prayers, and to receive the holy communion, were excommunicated, as the authors of disorder in the Church.

When kings, instead of persecuting the Church of Christ, became her "nursing fathers, and their queens her nursing mothers," the observance of the Lord's day became a frequent subject of legislation. The Emperor Constantine issued the most positive orders, that all persons should reverentially regard it: the very pagans in his army were charged, upon the Lord's day, to go out into the fields to pour out their souls in prayer; all proceedings at law were forbidden and suspended, except such as were of absolute necessity and charity, as the manumission of slaves, and the like; edicts, which were confirmed by the authority of subsequent emperors.

All secular business was prohibited, except such as necessity compelled them to do; and, at a later period, the Emperor Theodosius strictly forbid not Christians only, but pagans and Jews, from exercising any public games or sports on the Lord's day.

It seems at first sight somewhat remarkable, that, although the early Christians had ceased to celebrate the last day of the week, as their great day of prayer and rest; yet, next to the Lord's day, the Sabbath was held by them in great veneration, and, especially in the Eastern parts, honoured with all the public solemnities of religion.

But as the Gospel, in those parts, prevailed chiefly among the Jews, who were generally the first converts to the Christian faith, it was not altogether unnatural, that they should retain a great reverence for the Mosaic institutions, and especially for the Sabbath, as a day which had been appointed by God Himself, as the memorial of His rest from the work of creation,—a day, which had been again consecrated by their

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Justin
Martyr.
Apol. i. 67.
Tertull.
de Idol.
c. 14.
Tertull.
Apol. c. 16.
Tertull. de
Jejun. c. 15.
Chrysos.
Hom. de
Resur. s. 5.
et Hom. in
Eph. iii.
Can.
Apostol.
can. 9.
Concil.
Antioch.
can. 2.
Is. xlix. 23.

Bingham,
Ecl. Ant.
b. xx. c. 2.
s. 2.
Euseb. vit.
Constant.
L. iv. c. 18
—20.

Cave's
Prim.
Christ.
p. i. c. 7.

Athan.
Hom. de
Sement.
s. 1.
Soc. Ecl.
Hist. L. vi.
c. 8.

LECTURE great lawgiver Moses,—and observed by their ancestors, for
 XXXIX. so many ages, as the solemn day of their public worship. They were, therefore, too much attached to it, to be willing that it should be entirely antiquated and set aside¹.

And it is interesting to see the earnestness and zeal, with which the early Christians flocked to the simple services of their humble churches, not only when the law had flung the majesty of its protection around them, but when persecution rendered their meeting, for the purpose of Divine worship, a matter of extreme peril. They did not “forsake the assembling of themselves together,” because danger, or difficulty, or even certain death awaited them. In the dead of night, at early dawn, the hymn and prayer of the poor persecuted Christians rose to God, when they could not meet by day to serve Him without the hazard of their lives.

Heb. x. 25.

Tertull. de
 Fuga. 14.
 Euseb. L.
 viii. c. 2.
 Plin. Ep.
 97.

Bingham,
 b. xx. c. 2.
 s. 7.

Matt. xviii.
 20.

In those more devout times, there was no resorting to excuse and subterfuge, to justify absence from, or neglect of, the services of the Church; but, on the contrary, a zeal so strong, that “nothing but sickness, or a great necessity, or imprisonment, or banishment, could detain them from it; and then also, care was taken, that the chief part of it, the communion, was administered to them by the hands of the deacons, who carried it to those that were sick or in prison, that, as far as was possible, they might communicate still with the public congregation.” How strong a contrast does this zeal in the cause of God, this reverence for holy things, offer to the lukewarmness of the modern Christian! In this their appreciation of the high privilege of pleading Christ’s promise, “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,” we cannot find the faintest trace of that undevout spirit, which will plead weariness (perhaps from the dissipation of the preceding day), slight indisposition, or even secular business, as a reason for absence from the house of God. In those days, regular attendance at the stated hours of prayer was so looked upon as a test of Christian membership, that if any one, calling himself a brother, “absented himself three Lord’s days from the public service of the

¹ On this practice, see Chrysostom’s remarks in his Commentary on the Galatians ii. 17.

Church, without any just reason or necessity to compel him," he was forthwith excommunicated.

Such was the care with which the Christians of old time regarded that institution of a merciful God, by which He set apart one day in seven, wherein His creatures might attend to the welfare of the soul, without needlessly neglecting the body,—after having been permitted to spend six days in the needful care of the body, without sinfully neglecting the well-being of the soul! In this pious feeling they were imitated by our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, by whom, "for dispensing widely those 'good and perfect gifts' of heavenly knowledge, which have 'come down from the Father of lights,' provision was piously and judiciously made in the strict observance of Sunday. That care, therefore, of hallowing regularly a Sabbath to the Lord, which distinguishes modern England so advantageously from some of her continental neighbours, is a portion of her inheritance from Anglo-Saxon times. Numerous enactments of that distant age protected from secular profanation the consecrated seventh of human life."

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Bingham,
b. xx. c. 2.
s. 12.
Concil. Elib.
c. 21.
Sardic.
can. 11.
Trull.
can. 80.

James i. 17.

Soames's
Bampt.
Lect. s. ii.
p. 84.

In the same spirit our reformers declared that, "if we will be the children of our heavenly Father, we must be careful to keep the Christian Sabbath day, which is the Sunday; not only for that it is God's express commandment, but also to declare ourselves to be loving children, in following the example of our gracious Lord and Father."

Homily on
the Place
and Time
of Prayer.
Part I.

But, notwithstanding the godly exhortations of the reformers, and although to the comfortless services of the Romanist succeeded a pure and reasonable worship, alike removed from the enthusiasm of the fanatic and from the lip-service of the formalist, grievous indeed must have been that profanation of the Lord's day, which could have wrung, from the author of the Homily just quoted, an expression so indignantly bitter, as that "God was more dishonoured, and the devil better served on a Sunday, than upon all the days of the week beside." A complaint which might be applied with too much justice to many nominal Christians of the present day, who, with forgetfulness of the privileges of baptism, have cast off also its necessary obligations.

Homily,
ut supra.

We would not that the puritanical spirit of the Sabbata-

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Heylyn,
Hist. of
Sabb.
P. ii. c. 8.
s. 8.

rians of Elizabeth's days should be revived, who preached, that "to do any work on the Sabbath was as great a sin as adultery, and to ring more bells than one on the Lord's day was as great a sin as to commit murder:" but we would fain have a higher recognition of the various privileges connected with that holy day, which was twice consecrated by the Father, at the creation, and at Sinai; consecrated by the Son, at His resurrection from the dead; consecrated by the Spirit, at His first miraculous outpouring on the day of Pentecost. What God hath thus cleansed, it is not for us to call common.

And yet it is notorious that, in this Christian land, there are thousands, and tens of thousands, to whom the Lord's day brings with it no deep devotional rejoicing at the privilege of more spiritual communion with their God. To them it is no Sabbath,—no day of rest,—no day of prayer,—no day of retirement, and of self-communing,—no landmark, whence they may date their heavenward progress;—but rather a day, if not of actual riot and profaneness, at least of selfish, and perhaps sensual indulgence; a day of indolence, of secular occupation, of unchristian amusement. Even amongst those, whose education and opportunities might have taught them better things, how many are there, who, instead of looking forward with a holy joy to the religious services of the Sabbath, will regard them as clogs to their amusements; not as privileges to be hailed with eager thankfulness, but to be evaded or avoided; or, even if accepted, used with a listlessness, that too surely betrays the little real affection with which they are esteemed!

Causes for absence from God's service are ingeniously hunted up. With one, it is a pretence of more spiritual worship at home; with another, a dislike to the style, the matter, or even the manner of the preacher; a third pleads indisposition; a fourth requires perfect rest from all labour, both bodily and mental. And, even by those whose disregard for holy things does not extend so far, one attendance in the house of God on the Lord's day is deemed sufficient for all spiritual needs:—as if the Christian could ever receive too much of God's grace, or is justified in ever slighting the manifest means of procuring it; or as if the "jealous God" could suffer His services to be made a question of convenience,

their observance shared with the care of the merchandize, or the farm,—rendered a matter of secondary consideration to the fleeting caprice of fashion, or the conventional usages of society².

“I am no advocate,” says one, who has steadily set his face against the sin of Sabbath-breaking, “for a pharisaical observance of the Christian Sabbath; nor would I interfere with those quiet recreations which different individuals may think fit to allow themselves, provided that no offence be committed against public decorum, nor any shock given to that public opinion of the sanctity of the Lord’s day, which is a chief security for the continuance of religion amongst us. It is principally with a view to that opinion, that I would impress upon the higher classes the importance of an exemplary observance of the day; although it may well be urged upon them with reference to their own interests, as accountable, dying sinners. What is lawful for one Christian to do upon the Lord’s day, may not be lawful for another, with reference to its effects upon his own religious state, or upon that of others. Whatsoever is injurious to either is unprofitable. And if every person, who pretends to any religion, would fairly put it to his conscience and reason, what kind of employment would be most conducive to his own improvement, and to the honour of religion, he would need no casuist to resolve him what might, or might not be done upon the Lord’s day. At all events, the evil which is to be apprehended at the present moment, is not a puritanical strictness of observance, which may be the occasion of hypocrisy; but a laxity, fast verging to a total neglect. And were it otherwise, superstition in an ordinance of this kind is no very terrible thing; whereas irreligion is unspeakably mischievous. In spite of the increased number of our churches, in spite of the increased exertions of a zealous and laborious clergy, irreligion is, we fear, not on the wane amongst the poorer classes; and the surest and the most alarming symptom of it is the profanation of the Sabbath.”

Bp. Blomfield.

One remark in conclusion. If here the nominal Christian looks upon the Sabbath as a day of weariness, a day of re-

² See some admirable remarks on these points in Townson’s Discourses, xxi. p. 260—266.

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XXXIX. straint, a day on which the law debars him from most of his wonted diversions, or occupations,—if here he regards the services of that day as irksome or distasteful,—has he ever seriously reflected, what heaven would be to him if he were admitted therein? There God's eternal service will form one unbroken Sabbath: although it may be, that even in heaven there may be an especial and mysterious sanctification of appointed seasons. If here he desecrates the Sabbath, and does it openly, where can he hope to spend those millions and tens of millions of years, summed up in that awful word "Eternity?" In heaven? in the company of those spirits, who, day and night, sing unweariedly those praises to their God, which they loved to render when tarrying in the flesh? Nay, there can hardly be a heaven for him, who has shewn, when on earth, that he is unable to appreciate its holiness, or unwilling to enjoy its rest:—there is but one place beside.

LECTURE XL.

Commandment V.

EXODUS xx. 12.

“Honour thy father and thy mother : that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

AT the head of the second class of moral duties we find the commandment of the text, which may be looked upon as the connecting link between the two tables, partaking, as it does in some degree, of the nature of the obligations inculcated in both. LECTURE
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The primary intent of the commandment was, beyond a doubt, to impress upon the mind of the Israelite a sense of reverence and affection towards the author of his being : and secondarily, to teach him to regard all his superiors, both ecclesiastical and civil, with a kindred respect ; in that they stood in some degree to him in the light, and were invested with the authority, of a parent. And thus we may regard this commandment as establishing, more especially, the duty that the child owes to his parent, the Christian to his pastor, the subject to his sovereign, the servant to his master.

The respect due from a child to his parent formed a prominent feature in the character of the Hebrew polity. We may trace this feeling to a period, much more remote than the time of the delivery of the law by Moses ; we may carry it back to the patriarchal ages. In those times of primitive simplicity, the father's power over his children was little short of absolute ; and it tells highly for the becoming feelings of both parties, that instances of tyranny on the one hand, and of disobedience on the other, were so rare. A sacredness seems to have been shed around the parental authority, as being, in

LECTURE XL. some sort, a reflection of the divine; and this is a view in which it seems to have been regarded by the most polished nations of antiquity: and we may, perhaps, trace up the acknowledgment of the unlimited authority, which the Greek and Roman parent possessed over his child, to some traditional remains of customs and injunctions derived from patriarchal times.

Regarding the Mosaic code as referring, in the first instance, to those offences against the laws of God and of nature, which they had seen practised in Egypt, we may fairly suppose that, in the days of Moses, considerable laxity prevailed amongst the Egyptians in the respect that they paid to the parental tie¹; and it is more than probable, that the patriarchal simplicity of the Hebrews had been considerably sullied in this, as well as in other respects, during their slavery in a land of tyrants. Hence we find the first and chief point of the duty towards their neighbour laid down in the command, "Honour thy father and thy mother."

Natural as this injunction seems to be to us,—deep and holy as is the tie which binds the affectionate child to both his parents,—a remembrance of the customs of all eastern nations, with the exception of the Hebrews, will prove to us that, however strongly the paternal authority was recognized by the natural man,—"Honour thy mother" is a command, which had its origin exclusively of God. The habits of Eastern countries have undergone but little change since the patriarchal times; and we still can recognize, in the numerous families of Ishmael and Esau, the same distinctive peculiarities that characterized them of old. To the Eastern husband, woman was, and is, his help,—his drudge,—his slave,—the instrument of his pleasures,—the tool of his will,—the victim of his passions;—rarely the bosom friend,—the soothing companion,—the gentle counsellor. How could the child,—although he might instinctively love his mother,—how could he honour her, when every hour he was the witness of her degradation? when he saw her repudiated, perhaps to make way for some newer favourite, when her charms were

¹ Herodotus tells us, that sons are not bound to make provision for their parents, if they are unwilling; but daughters are compelled to do so, however unwilling. Euterpe, 35.

ou the wane ; and when she was, in most cases, the sharer LECTURE
XL.
only, not the exclusive possessor of her lord's affections? With the Israelite the case was different : the Hebrew matron was (at least according to the principle of the Mosaic law) an honoured woman. She was looked upon as one, whom (for aught they knew) God might have chosen as the future mother of their Messiah ; and thus the legal obligation, under which the Hebrew rested, to honour his mother as well as his father, was one, and not the least, of those many distinguishing points, which marked him out as a member of a chosen generation, a peculiar people, amongst the nations of the East. Strong, indeed, are the Divine commands in this respect ; and in their very severity (so to speak) we may clearly see the mind of God upon the sacred nature, and the holy authority, of the parental tie.

Death was the penalty of the unnatural child who cursed his parents, or lifted up his hand to strike them : and again, Ex. xxi. 17.
it was written, "if a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them ; all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die : so shalt thou put evil away from among you." It is worthy of remark, that the same punishment is awarded to the idolater, and blasphemer : the outrage being evidently considered as of a kindred spirit. Nor was this feeling limited to the days of Moses ; for we find a declaration of precisely the same character, in the Book Ecclesiasticus, "He that forsaketh his father, is as a blasphemer ; and he that angereth his mother, is cursed of God ;" a Deut. xxi. 18. 21.
1b. xvii. 2. 5.
Lev. xxiv. 16.
remark, which, though proceeding from an uninspired pen, may well be supposed to bespeak the feelings of the better part of the Jewish people. And, at a later period, the Apostle Paul "seems to acknowledge the affinity between the two vices, by the arrangement of the offenders, 'blasphemers, disobedient to parents.'"
Eccles. iii. 16. See also the preceding part of the chapter.
2 Tim. iii. 2.
Ogden, Sermon ix. p. 318.
4th ed.

Nor was this a harsh view of the question, strange as it may seem to modern ears. In enforcing filial obedience by such tremendous penalties, and in fencing round parental authority with such solemn cautions, the Jewish law seems to have had an eye to the principle, that he, who despises

LECTURE ^{XL.} parental counsel, bids defiance to parental rule, and feels no gratitude for parental affection in his earlier years, will, in all probability, as his passions strengthen, not stop at this point of disobedience, but will shew as little hesitation in despising human laws, as in scorning divine injunctions.

It should not be forgotten, that though the Levitical law places the parental authority upon a higher footing, inasmuch as the obligation to regard it was founded upon a divine principle,—the authority itself was more restricted, than in either of the two great nations of pagan antiquity, Greece or Rome. By the laws of the former it was held, that a man's power over his slaves and children was equally absolute : whilst, in the earlier days of Rome, the father was armed with unlimited right of life and death over his children ; and was even empowered to sell them three times over : a power, which lasted during their whole life, or ended only with the third sale. It is impossible to advocate this unbounded power, inasmuch as it destroys at once the first and holiest principle of obedience, —affection. But, under the Jewish law, it was only against the confirmed rebel, who exhibited the worst features of moral depravity, that the anathemas of divine vengeance were uttered : and when such rebellion had been investigated by public trial, and established by the voluntary evidence, not of the outraged father only, but by that of the mother also, whose proverbial tenderness might well be supposed to prevent her from coming forward, except in an extreme case,—it was then that the offender was put to death, as a pest to society, and a smoke in the nostrils of his God ; that all Israel might hear, and put away the evil from among them.

It had been well for the Jewish character, if selfishness, the besetting sin of man, had never found means to evade duties of such a plain and straightforward nature. In our Saviour's time, a sad change had taken place in the character of the once high-minded child of Abraham : and one part, at least, of this commandment was violated ; it was that which enjoined the son, to support his parent in old age or in distress. The Jews made this of none effect by their traditions. They held, that if the son formally dedicated to the temple that portion of goods which he could afford for a parent's relief, it then was not lawful for him to succour that parent.

Gibbon,
Ch. 44.
vol. 8.
p. 52, 53.
ed. 1819.

Deut. xxi.
21.

By some extraordinary casuistry, the exact nature of which does not appear, he did not by this dedication consider himself absolutely bound to devote his estate to sacred uses, and so to deprive himself of his own luxuries or comforts; but to abstain from relieving his parents he was inviolably bound. It was this compromise between God and mammon, that drew down our Saviour's indignant rebuke upon the self-righteous, yet covetous Pharisee; "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

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See Elsley's
Annot. on
Matt. xv.
1—6.

Mark vii. 9.

Nor is the Christian covenant elsewhere silent upon this first of nature's laws. Not only have we the example of our blessed Saviour, who, with all the consciousness of the God-head resting upon Him, was subject unto His parents;—not only do we find Him, in His last agony, anticipating His bereaved mother's wants, and consigning her to the care of the "disciple whom He loved;"—but we have this example pressed upon us in the touching counsel, "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." "God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother," are the words of Christ. "Children, obey your parents in all things," says St. Paul, "for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." And it is remarkable, that the Apostle makes no exception, and affixes no limit to this obedience. It would follow then, that no Christian community, deserving the name, would wish to be absolved from it².

John xix.
26, 27.

1 John ii. 6.
Matt. xv. 4.

Col. iii. 20.

Unlimited, in the strictest sense, must be our obedience to a parent's commands, during the season of our childhood; with one, and only one exception, which speaks for itself. It is, when they manifestly clash with the commands of God. In this case, whilst filial love would modestly put forward the direct law of the Gospel, as its defence,—filial respect would prevent a child from putting this law forward obtrusively, or offensively; and filial obedience would humbly and affectionately state the grounds of its conduct, viz. that it hesitates only to execute a parent's bidding, when it is visibly hostile

² See also some singular laws on the relative duties of parents and children, in the earlier ages of Christianity, given by Bingham, Bk. xvi. c. 9. s. 2; vii. c. 3. s. 4; xxii. c. 2. s. 4.

LECTURE to the letter and the spirit of the laws of Him, who is the
 {^{XL.} Lord of all, both law, and child, and parent.

It must not be forgotten, that even here forbearance must be stretched to its utmost limits; and rare indeed are the occasions, in which a child would be called upon so to act; and more rare still the cases, in which the mere child should venture to question the soundness of a parent's judgment.

Universally as this view of filial obedience on the one hand, and of parental authority on the other, will probably be admitted; there are those who will think that the tie, if it be not broken, is at least lessened in mature years, when a child has left his early home, and become himself a parent. Surely, if filial duty means any thing, it means that it should be a principle never absent from our feelings or our conduct. Derived, as it is, from God, it must needs be as unalterable as that love of Him, which no change of time, or place, or circumstances, can ever lessen. It is surely inconsistent with the perfect law of Christ, to suppose that we are, at one period of our lives, to regard our parents with an affection akin to reverence; to heed their counsel as second only to the voice of the Most High; to watch their wishes; to anticipate their wants;—and, at another time, to be lukewarm in the performance of these duties, or to consider them as virtually dissolved by the presumed independence that we have carved out for ourselves. There will be no time of our lives, at which we shall be absolved from the labour of love towards our parents; no time, at which (with a due regard to those who look to him for support,) the truly affectionate child will not fly to soothe a parent's anxieties, to drive away a parent's discomforts, to succour a parent's distress of body or of mind.

He will feel it a privilege, to be allowed to repay some part of the debt which the well-tried love of many a by-past year has put upon him. He will pause long, and warily, before he prefers his own counsels to those of the author of his being. He will bear with the infirmities of a parent's temper, he will not goad the querulousness of old age, nor scoff at the peculiarities and fancies, which are often the attendants upon the closing scene of life. He will feel, that no where may the hoary head so fittingly look for honour as to his child; that at no hands may old age so justly claim indulgence and

sympathy, as at his, who owes to that age, under Providence, both life itself, and all that store of anxious counsels which, if heeded, make life respectable, and death not formidable. He knows, that it is not filial obedience, that will make an old man sensible he is dishonoured or slighted in his family;—not filial respect, which will draw bitter tears from his dim eyes, that the evening of his days is less bright, less serene, less full of hope, than its gayer morning. It is not filial love, that will make a father feel “how sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is, to have a thankless child.”

These considerations will perhaps help us in arriving at a just conclusion, upon the debateable point, what deference is to be paid to parents known to be habitually sinful and irreligious. The question does not seem to be, whether we are, or are not to obey their commands, under these circumstances; for it requires no argument to prove, that nothing but the apostolic principle, of obeying God rather than men, can justify disobedience. It seems to be rather a question of personal deference, and personal respect: and this, perhaps, may be fittingly and only answered by the principles of affection. Bitter is the feeling of a dutiful child, when he is called upon, even in mind, to blame a parent’s counsels, or to find fault with a parent’s habits. There is a sense of grief, almost akin to humiliation, in dwelling upon a parent’s vices. Let the heart, then, alone know its own bitterness; and hide its grief within itself. Let it be silent upon a parent’s sins,—tender to a parent’s follies,—indulgent to a parent’s infirmities,—though it may not be able to shut out the mournful consciousness of a parent’s criminality. There is much, very much, within the power of a pious child, under these distressing circumstances. The frequent prayer may mount to heaven, in earnest pleadings for the loved, though erring one’s conversion. The example of personal godliness may be shewn, and will surely not altogether be without some effect, though the evidence of its influence may not be immediately apparent;—and a word of divine truth, spoken in season by a child, may, by God’s blessing, be brought home to a sinful parent’s heart; and out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God’s praise may be perfected, and His purpose worked.

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Matt. xxi.
16.

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But there are other duties impressed upon us by this commandment, besides that of obedience to our earthly parents. There are those who stand to us in the light of parents, either by their divine office, or their civil authority. Our spiritual teachers and lawfully appointed pastors are, as it were, our parents in the Lord; and, as such, we are bidden to "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." Through their ministry we are born again, and they are the human instruments of ushering us into the glorious privileges of the Gospel. Theirs is the task, to nourish us with the "bread of life; to give milk to babes, strong meat to men:" it is theirs, in God's name, "to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort, with all long-suffering." They are spoken of as "ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God;" "as ambassadors for Christ;" "as workers together with God;" "labourers in God's harvest;" "messengers of the Lord of Hosts." Invested then, as they are, with titles and offices of such awful import, can we so far delude ourselves as to imagine, that we are to judge of their spiritual counsels as of the words of ordinary men? It cannot be, that we are obeying God's commands, or acting after God's mind in this respect, if we become even as the prophesied scoffers, of whom the Apostle warned his own son in the faith; if we, after our own lusts, desert our appointed pastors, "heap to ourselves teachers, having itching ears;" and so "turn away our ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables."

See 2 Tim.
iv. 3, 4.

"Thinks he," asks St. Cyprian, "that he is with Christ, who does counter to the priests of Christ? who separates himself from the fellowship of his clergy and people? That man bears arms against the Church, he withstands God's appointment; an enemy to the altar, a rebel against the sacrifice of Christ; for faith, perfidious; for religion, sacrilegious; a servant not obedient; a son not pious; a brother not loving; setting bishops at nought, and deserting the priests of God, he dares to build another altar, to offer another prayer with unlicensed words; to profane by false sacrifices the truth of the Lord's Sacrifice. He is not permitted to a knowledge of what he does, since he, who strives against the appointment of God, is punished by the Divine censure, for the boldness of his daring."

Cyprian,
Treat. v. 14.

1 Thess. v.
13.

Heb. v.
12—14.
2 Tim. iv. 2.
1 Cor. iv. 1.
2 Cor. v. 20.
Ib. vi. 1.
Matt. ix. 37.
Mal. ii. 7.

We would not advocate that slavish subjection of the soul, which the Roman priesthood claims over her children. As God's service is itself a reasonable service, so is the deference to God's ministers a reasonable deference; one, founded upon the certainty of their divine commission, not resting upon the mere human accident of superior qualifications.

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See Matt.
xxiii. 2, 3.
John xiii.
20.
Luke x. 16.
1 Thess. iv.
8.

So, too, will the true disciple understand, that the same law will forbid him to be "presumptuous and self-willed," as those of whom the Apostle speaks, "who despised government," and were not "afraid to speak evil of dignities." He will "submit to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." He will be subject unto the higher powers, "not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake;" "not only," that is, "for fear of the punishment which they may otherwise inflict upon him, but out of a sense of his duty, and in obedience to the command of God." And thus it is the true Christian alone, who can become the sound patriot, or loyal subject, upon principle; remembering, that Christ exhorted His disciples "to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's; and unto God the things that were God's."

2 Pet. ii.
10.

1 Pet. ii.
13, 14.

Rom. xiii. 5.

Beveridge,
on the 5th
Com.

Matt. xxii.
21.

In like manner will the Christian servant regard his master, as his parent for the time being. He will be obedient unto his "master according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." He will be subject unto his master "with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."

Eph. vi.
5-7.

1 Pet. ii. 18.

There is a reciprocity in all these duties and obligations. Do parents look for reverence at their children's hands? then must they not "provoke them to wrath;" then must they watch over, guard, and maintain them in their younger years; then must they train them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, remembering, that their little ones are lent, rather than given to them by God,—entrusted to them, as souls over which they are to watch here, and for which they will have to give an account hereafter.

Eph. vi. 4.

LECTURE XL. Do spiritual pastors look for affection and attention from their flock? then must they "take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Then must they not lord it "over God's heritage," but be "gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."

Acts xx. 28.
1 Pet. v. 3.
2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

Do sovereigns look for loyalty from their subjects? then must they not strive to govern without the law, but by the law; remembering, that "the God of Israel said, . . . He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

2 Sam. xxiii. 3.

Do masters look for cheerful obedience from their servants? then must they not forget the Apostle's counsel, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven:"—"forbearing threatening, knowing that there is no respect of persons with Him." The Christian master will not forget, that, as he is not faultless himself, so it were unreasonable in him to expect perfection in his servants. Between the kindest master and the best of servants, there will be always much cause to bear and forbear; and if, on the one hand, there is kindness, gentleness, consideration, and a regard for those little comforts, which, small as they are in detail, tell most powerfully in the aggregate of human happiness, there is good reason to suppose, that on the other there will be fidelity, attachment, and obedience. Unless a Christian master regards every member of his household as a member of his family as well,—and, as such, entitled to his protection, his sympathy, and his counsel, even as his own children,—why should he complain, that the servant, on his part, should be the mere hireling, or the discontented drudge?

Col. iv. 1.
Eph. vi. 9.

St. Paul tells us, that "this is the first commandment with promise." To the Jew the long possession of the land of Canaan was the reward, held forth generally to obedience;—a promise, which was more peculiarly attached to this commandment, as if God meant to indicate, that "respect to this one of the divine laws had a superior efficacy in drawing down that blessing, which indeed was only due to the observance of all."

Ib. 2, 3.

Ogden,
Serm. ix.
p. 316.
4th ed.

But surely the Christian, even as the Jew, is a partaker in the blessings promised of old to the obedient child! If we look for their fulfilment in this world, we shall find it in the respect which always accompanies the man, who is known and marked as "a good son" upon Christian principle. LECTURE
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The heart goes warmly with him in his every pursuit: we wish well for him, we augur well of him. We look fondly forward to his success in this life, because his conduct has already given the best evidence, that he has at least striven to gain the blessing of his spiritual Parent, by a reverential regard for that law of His, which bids him love, cherish, and obey his earthly sire.

But hereafter there will be a more glorious recompence. Resting implicitly on the promises of God, we may cast an almost prophetic glance beyond the grave, and regard him as one of those chosen ones to whom it will be given, to dwell for ever in that better land, of which the earthly Canaan was but a type and shadow.

LECTURE XLI.

Commandment VII.

EXODUS XX. 13.

"Thou shalt not kill."

LECTURE XLI. BITTER must have been Adam's agony, when the murdered corpse of Abel displayed to him the first fruits of his own transgression, as evidenced in the workings of that corrupt nature which he had communicated to his offspring; and solemn was that denunciation, by which, in the rebuke given to Cain, God recorded His abhorrence of the mingled crimes of passion and envy, leading on to murder: "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand."

Gen. iv.
10, 11.

At first, perhaps, Cain might have endeavoured to justify himself to his own heart, by pleading that, as there was no express prohibition as yet given against murder, so his guilt could not be so very great, in slaying his brother in a fit of ungovernable fury. He might have urged his ignorance of doing wrong, and his supposed provocation; and so have satisfied himself, that, at any rate, he was not a greater sinner than his father. But there was even in the first murderer's conscience a worm that dieth not, and a fire that could not be quenched. His reply to God's demand, "where is Abel thy brother?" at once proves, that he was "very sensible he had done wrong; and he prevaricates, dissembles, and denies it, with a mixture of meanness and insolence, the natural attendants of conscious guilt." "I know not," is his answer; "am I my brother's keeper?"

Ogden,
in loc. s. xiv.
p. 362.
Gen. iv. 9.

Ib. iv. 23.

The example of Cain was not lost upon his posterity, and

we can scarcely doubt, but that the recklessness of human life, which invariably accompanies an ignorance or abandonment of God, was one part of that wickedness which drew down upon the sons of Cain, and the corrupted children of Seth, the awful visitation of the deluge. And, after that period, it was surely with a reference to what had actually passed in the old world, rather than with a prospective allusion to crimes that were foreseen, as about to take place in the new order of things, that the distinction was made between the value of the life of man and of beast; and whilst permission was given to Noah to slay the latter for food, the prohibition to destroy the former, under any pretence whatever, was renewed: "surely your blood of your lives will I require;—at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of every man; at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." And to some faint and traditionary remembrance of the great moral precepts then delivered to Noah, rather than to any innate principle of good, or any natural sense of justice (properly so called), we may probably trace many of those exalted sentiments, and many of those high-souled feelings, which are to be found amongst Gentile writers; and, amongst them, that abhorrence with which they regarded the person and the character of the murderer.

Gen. ix. 5, 6.

See Van Mildert's Boyle Lect. xiv. p. 59.

Lect. xxxvi. p. 435.

We have already seen, how great was the corruption of the manners of the Egyptians in the days of Moses; and the ruthless command of Pharaoh, to destroy all the male children of the Hebrews, is sufficient evidence, that the lives of their slaves at least were held cheaply enough among them, and that child-murder was thought but little of as a sin, when it could be regarded as a matter of expedient policy.

But it was not only as a merciful warning against the practices of the idolatrous Egyptians, that the command, "Thou shalt not kill," was given to the Hebrews. They were going to a land where human sacrifices were common, under the vain notion, that the more valuable the victim, the more acceptable the offering; and so, to mark God's abhorrence of this practice of slaying His creatures, under the pretence of doing Him honour, the same punishment, as against the idolater and blasphemer, was denounced against him, whether

LECTURE XLI. Israelite or stranger, who copied the example of the surrounding nations, and gave his seed to Molech:—he was stoned to death. By the Jewish law, no satisfaction was to be taken for the life of a wilful murderer; death for death was the invariable rule: and, even in cases of accidental and involuntary murder, the homicide was a doomed exile, an alien from his home and friends, confined to a city of refuge,

Lev. xx.
2—5.
Deut. xii.
31.

Num. xxxv. amenable to the lawful vengeance of “the revenger of blood,” if he ventured beyond its pale. A similar belief, that there was an abiding unholy taint attached to the person even of the involuntary homicide, seems to have influenced the primitive Church in the care that they took, that no one, who had been a soldier, should be allowed to be ordained a presbyter, or deacon; and that no bishops should sit as judges in capital causes.

Bingham,
b. xvi. c. 10.
s. 8.

How different was this scrupulous spirit from the military propensities of the warrior prelates of the middle ages; when not bishops only, armed to the teeth, led on their squadrons to battle and bloodshed, but even a pope was found more frequently on his war-steed than on his knees: for the second Julius was notoriously a greater adept, in superintending the details of a siege, or in conducting the manœuvres of a campaign, than in watching over the spiritual welfare of his subjects, or in composing the gathering differences of Christendom.

Mosheim's
Eccl. Hist.
b. iv. c. 1.
5, 6.

Although, in every age of the world and condition of society, a peculiar curse has been supposed to attend upon the wilful murderer, (except in some countries, in cases of infanticide¹), yet there are other practices, forbidden by this commandment, upon which human opinion has not been so unanimous.

Seneca de
Ira, lib. iii.
c. 15.
Virg. Æn.
vi. 434-9.
See Gibbon,
c. 44.
vol. 8.
p. 108, 109.
ed. 1819.

The two principal of these are suicide, and duelling: the one recommended and practised by the philosophers of the Gentile world, upon the principle that, when a man is tired of his life, he has as much right to rid himself of it, as of any other burden; the other advocated, as the only means of keeping society in check, by the professed disciples of Him who forbade the Christian, even to be angry with his brother with-

Matt. v. 22. out a cause.

¹ See, on the permission of infanticide, “Jenkin's Reasonableness of Christianity,” Part III. c. 4. s. 3.

It might have been well for the heathen, who had no other LECTURE
XLI. ground for believing in a future state of rewards and punishments, than that instinctive hope which whispers of immortality, or those faint traditions of revealed truth that existed even among Gentile nations; it might have been well for the Brutuses and Catos of antiquity, gravely to declare, that they had a right to lay down their life when every earthly hope was gone; and when honours, fortune, friends, had all abandoned them, and made them feel themselves alone in the world. With them it was a balance of interest; a calculation of profit and loss: but then, they were not bidden to look upon life as a state of trial,—as a race that must be run,—as a course that must be finished,—as a battle that must be fought;—there was no stifling of well-known truths in the Gentile suicide,—no wilful disregard of the oracles of Almighty God. As far as his actual *knowledge* was concerned, his was a sin against society, rather than against religion. But with the Christian, it is a widely different thing. How can he plead ignorance of the mind of God in this respect, when every page of the Bible is full of exhortations to bear patiently those ills of life, in the vain hope of avoiding which the suicide will rush unbidden into eternity? “It is absurd to command us ‘to persevere unto the end,’ if the end be determinable by our own choice; to bid us ‘not be weary in well doing,’ if we may cease from it at pleasure.”

Paley, Post.
Ser. vol. i.
s. 23.

Job was in misery, and bitter in soul; he longed for death, but it came not; he would have rejoiced exceedingly, if he could have found the grave. “Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the grave,” is the passionate prayer that agony wrung from the spirit of this patient man:—but he would not take the matter into his own hands; “all the days of my appointed time,” he said, “will I wait, till my change come.”

Job iii. 20—
22.

Job xiv. 13,
14.

The Apostle Paul knew, that to him “to die was gain;” he had “a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which was far better:” nevertheless, he was content to abide in the flesh, to do his Master’s work. He knew that a violent and painful death awaited him; but he knew as well, that, whilst he inculcated upon others the necessity of a “patient waiting for Christ,” it would ill become him to be backward in “enduring hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

Phil. i. 21—
23.

2 Thess. iii.

So 2 Tim. ii. 3.

LECTURE too, that noble army of martyrs, who laid down their lives for
 XLI. truth and conscience sake, (acting upon the promise of Christ,
 Matt. x. 22. "he that endureth to the end shall be saved,") made no
 attempt to save themselves by suicide, from agony before
 them, or from tortures in prospect. "They had trial of
 cruel mockings and scourgings; they were stoned, they
 were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword:
 they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and
 caves of the earth." Why all this endurance? there must
 have been something more than mere stubbornness of pur-
 pose, to support them unflinchingly under these severe task-
 ings of human nature. It was, because they knew it was
 written, "Thou shalt not kill:" and, in those simple days,
 there were no logical subtleties at work, to explain away the
 natural conclusion, that in this prohibition self-murder was
 intended.

Heb. xi.
36—38.

See
Whately's
Logic,
p. 138.

It is difficult, then, to conceive it possible for a Christian,
 who strives to live, as it were, in God's presence, to cling
 stedfastly to His promises, to take counsel by His threats,
 and to regard this life as a passage only to the next,—it is
 difficult to conceive it possible for him to lay down his life,
 under any pressure of bodily or mental sorrow, before its
 legitimate recall by Him who gave it. What are to him the
 afflictions and sufferings of this life? he knows that, compared
 with the boundless duration of eternity, they "are but for a
 2 Cor. iv. 17. moment," and work for the patient child of God "a far more
 exceeding and eternal weight of glory." He can point to the
 page that tells him, "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth,
 Heb. xii. 6. and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

But there are those, who will not set God always before
 them; those, who live in no fear of His threats, who have no
 hope full of immortality through His promises; those, who
 "say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of
 his own heart, no evil shall come upon you." Before any one,
 born and nurtured in a Christian land, can have arrived at a
 state like this, there must have been a wilful preference of
 darkness rather than light;—a shutting of the eyes and ears
 to every warning and call of God. And what wonder is it, if,
 in cases like these, the Spirit of God, so constantly grieved,
 becomes at length quenched; and the lost ones be given over

Jer. xxiii.
17.

to the wretchedness that they have courted? Why need we marvel, if then Satan be permitted to tempt them, to end as they have begun,—to close a life of ungodliness by suicide? —a crime for which, as far as we can see, there can be no repentance; dying, as the self-murderer does, in the actual commission of wilful sin. Such was the end of Saul, who fell upon his sword, when he saw his armies routed and himself disgraced; when, wounded and bleeding, he feared to fall into the hands of his Philistine foes. Such was the end of Ahithophel, whose pride was stung to the quick when Hushai's policy was preferred to his, whose counsel in those days "was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God." Such was the end of Judas, whose ambition first led him to follow the steps of Jesus,—and whose disappointed covetousness urged him to His betrayal:—when he saw that He was condemned, compunction came across him,—but too late:—"he departed, and went, and hanged himself."

LECTURE
XLI.1 Sam. xxxi.
3, 4.2 Sam. xvi.
23; xvii. 23.See Lect.
xix. p. 216.Matt. xxvii.
5.

In none of these cases need we resort to the plea of insanity, to account for the motive-cause of self-destruction; and the same remark will apply, even now, to almost every instance in which an ungodly man commits suicide. It is not that the reason is gone,—but that the Guide of that reason has departed: he has wilfully rejected that heavenly Counsellor; and he is given over to the suggestions of him, with whom it is indeed a triumph, if he can succeed in tempting man to destroy both soul and body at a blow. You may as well acquit the murderer, the adulterer, the robber, of the consequences of his crimes,—because passion has, for the season, mastered principle,—as pronounce the suicide a temporary lunatic, because despair, or grief, or sin, have rendered him, at once, impatient of a life which he feels to be a burden, and indifferent to a heaven, to which he has never striven to attain. There are cases, beyond a doubt, where reason is so manifestly thrown off its balance, that the unhappy suicide is as little apparently accountable for his actions, as the unreasoning idiot. But there is too much reason to fear that, in reality, these cases are more rare than we are willing to suppose; and, though juries may be disposed, through mistaken tenderness, to lean to what is called the side of mercy, in their verdicts, and apparently to act upon the principle, that no one in his

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perfect senses can commit suicide, the reflecting Christian will conclude from the highest authority,—his Bible,—that, let a man once wilfully cast off all care of God,—let him once abandon His teaching,—once give himself over to the tempter,—and then,—as he has sown, so must he expect to reap. At least he can safely decide, that neither the defeated monarch Saul, nor the baffled politician Ahithophel, nor the despairing, conscience-stricken betrayer Judas, were lunatics at the time of their committing suicide.

Duelling is another breach of this commandment, not only tolerated by the general customs of society,—not only sanctioned by the example of the most exalted of the land; but the duellist is very commonly looked upon as a man of a high sense of honour,—the man of dignified and sensitive feeling,—the man who is keenly alive to his own dignity and position in society. All this may be perfectly true; but it is impossible that he can be, at the same time, the man of a high sense of religious obligation and Christian duty,—the man of humble and childlike feeling,—the man, who is keenly alive to his own lost miserable condition by nature, and his exalted position and dignity, as a disciple of Christ, through grace.

Again, nothing can be more clear, than that in the duellist there can be no trace of that free, ready, full, and perfect forgiveness of the injuries that we receive at the hands of our fellow-creatures,—the sole condition upon which we are privileged to expect, or even to apply for, the pardon of those many daily and hourly transgressions, by the very least of which our souls are forfeit to the Justice of the Most High. “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your
Matt. vi. 15. Father forgive your trespasses.” The duellist acts in direct defiance of this law of Christ:—why? because it is opposed to the law of honour, which will not allow him to pass by an affront, nor to offer the ready hand of forgiveness. Such meekness would be called cowardice; such tameness of spirit, unworthy the dignity of a man, or the character of a gentleman: and so, utterly regardless of the place he may hold in God's sight,—in order to keep his position in the eyes of the world, he will avenge instead of forgive, and run the risk, to say the least of it, of adding murder to his malice. The courage

of the Christian is far beyond that of the duellist: it is that spirit, which, whilst it forbids him wantonly to affront another, renders him fearless in avowing, why he is difficult to be affronted himself,—and incapable of revenging injury, if it be thrust upon him;—namely, that he fears God rather than man. It is his glory, not to be one of those who love the praise of men rather than the praise of God, and who forget, that our Redeemer Himself has told us, “that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God.”

LECTURE
XLI.
Luke xvi.
15.

Let, then, the worldly devise what rules they please, to keep society in order:—but let them be consistent;—let them honestly avow in words, what they advocate in practice,—that they deliberately intend to set those rules above the commands, the threats, the pleadings, and the warnings of the Saviour.

The lawfulness of war has been questioned by many, with reference to this commandment; and the profuse waste of human life,—the rapine,—the violence,—the plunder, which, of necessity, must accompany even the mildest form of war, have been thought sufficient reasons, by one denomination of Christians, for condemning it altogether. We must look to the mind of God in this respect; and though we may admit, that it were happy for the world, did it act in accordance with the well-known principles of those peaceful men, to whom we have alluded; and though we may bow before the words of Christ, “blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God;”—yet, when our civil and religious liberties are in peril from foreign and unlawful aggression, we shall be hard put to it, to find any scriptural authority forbidding us to draw the sword, if need be, in their defence. Had God deemed warfare, in every case, a breach of this commandment, is it credible that He would Himself have fought for Israel, as He many times told them that He did?

Matt. v. 9.

Deut. xx.
3, 4.
Num. xxi.
2, 3.
Jos. iii. 10;
v. 14.

Would He have charged His chosen people, to destroy the very name of the idolatrous nations around them from under heaven? Would He have rent the kingdom from Saul, because he failed to do as he was bidden,—because he would not go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they had, “both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass?” Aggressive warfare is indeed the wanton exercise of

Deut. vii. 2
—4; xx. 17.

1 Sam. xv.
3. 23.

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XLI.Porteus on
Death.

power on the part of the strong against the weak ; and the false halo of glory, that gilds the successful conqueror's name, too often blinds us to the misery which he inflicts upon the innocent victims of his selfish ambition. The orphan's tear, the widow's plaint, the virgin's dishonour, the poor man's desolation,—cities sacked, kingdoms laid waste for years, souls sent to their account unwarned, and, it may be, unrepentant, are fearful detractions from the warrior's glory, and remind us of the Christian poet's saying, "one murder makes a villain, millions a hero."

But, whilst thus we must qualify the enthusiasm, which the deeds of a Cæsar, an Alexander, a Charles, or a Napoleon, may rouse within us,—whose heart will not go with the Maccabæan chiefs, who fought, inch by inch, the battles of their country and their God? Who will deem the Huguenots of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries violaters of the laws of God, because the laws of men refused them liberty of conscience without appealing to the sword? But to come to a later day :—when the revolutionary spirit of France had, not only for herself, abjured Christianity as the national faith, but was anxious to force her infidel example upon others ;—was it our's tamely to submit to the will of the republic, to abandon civil and religious liberty, to abjure God Himself at the beck of the ungodly, from a scrupulous reluctance to appeal to arms in the defence of all? Beyond all doubt, it is the duty of a Christian statesman, to use war as his last resource, when all other means of defence have failed ;—not to plunge his country hastily into scenes of bloodshed and contention, unless compelled ; but still to take good heed, that the very foundations of society be not sapped, through an over-cautious disinclination to protect the weak from the aggressions of the powerful.

So, too, with regard to judicial punishment. Where God Himself has once commanded,—not permitted only,—other crimes besides that of murder, such as adultery, blasphemy, filial stubbornness, idolatry, and the like, to be punished with death ;—it is a sufficient indication of His judgment against the several degrees of guilt, to bid the Christian legislator pause, before he declares the absolute unlawfulness of visiting with death any transgression, save that of murder. At the

same time, he will so act upon the general principles of the Gospel, as to render a penal code as mild as is compatible with the safe protection of society. LECTURE
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One point, and that an important one, remains to be considered. At the first view of this commandment, the Christian may be apt to think, that if he is clear from being accessory to murder, either directly or indirectly, he is guiltless of its breach. Our Saviour's heart-searching comment upon it will teach him a different lesson. "It was said by them of old time," He declared in His first public discourse, in which He stripped the Mosaic law of the false glosses and traditionary subterfuges with which the Pharisees had cumbered it,—“it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill: and, whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” This is not the only allusion of our Saviour's to the malpractices of those days, which proves to us, that the Jew too frequently looked to the shadow, whilst he disregarded the substance of the law; acted up to its letter, but forgot its spirit. Christ requires in His disciples all those qualities and dispositions of the heart, which secure and promote the true meaning of the law. He cuts down sin at the very root; and prevents the act, by commanding the suppression of every impulse and desire, which may immediately, or remotely, lead to it. So, too, the beloved disciple John, speaking in the full spirit of his divine Master's words, says, “He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death; whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”

Matt. v.
21, 22.

1 John iii.
14, 15.

Look, then, at this law with a Christian's eye, and see how often it is violated, even by those who deem themselves true disciples of the Gospel. Does the angry and hot-headed spirit reflect, that, when he gives way to what he is pleased to call the infirmities of his temper, he is virtually breaking our Saviour's rule with regard to this commandment? Alas! every day's experience may teach him, that a few minutes of passion may lead to consequences, which a long life may be unable to undo: that, though murder may not be the effect, yet they may give birth, in some cases, to alienation of old friendships; in others, to coldness,—to mistrust,—to confirmed and settled

LECTURE ^{XLI.} hatred; in all there must be, of necessity, a lack of that Christian charity, without which, (let the professed Christian argue upon it as he may, let worldly usages sanction what they please, let a spurious liberality pass by uncensured what it likes,) we have an Apostle's authority for declaring, that, in the sight of God, there can be no saving vital principle of Christianity.

1 Cor. xiii. 1.

Prov. xvii.
14.

Well, indeed, might the wise man say of old, "the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water." There is as much of human experience, as of divine truth, in the remark. The primitive Christians seem to have been peculiarly alive, not to the inexpediency only, but to the sinfulness of giving way to passionate humours; and to the necessity of placing some powerful restraint upon their indulgence. They could not forget, that "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, and strife," are placed side by side with "murder," in St. Paul's catalogue of the works of the flesh; and that though there may be, and is, a visible difference in the magnitude of these offences,—yet each and all exclude those, who practise them, from any inheritance in the "kingdom of God."

Gal. v.
20, 21.

2 Cor. vi. 1.

In the early days of Christianity, when professed disciples looked to the ministers of the Gospel as "workers together with God," and, as such, speaking His commands, rather than delivering their own opinions, the Church acted upon the spirit of the words of Christ; and thus, "all open enmity, and quarrelling, strife, envy, anger, and contention, professed malice and hatred, were punished with excommunication, as tendencies towards this great sin, and lower degrees of murder²." "The communion was the great symbol of love and charity, and the covenant of peace and unity, and the great uniter of men's hearts and affections. Therefore all, who visibly wanted these necessary qualifications, were thought unworthy of that venerable mystery, and accordingly obliged by the discipline of the Church, till they were so qualified, to abstain from it;"—a decree, which was sanctioned by several successive councils of the Church. Precisely of the same character, and founded upon the same principles, is the disci-

Bingham,
b. xvi. c. 10.
s. 17.

² On the abhorrence of the primitive Church of drunkenness, as leading to murder, see Chrys. in Eph. Hom. 4. p. 145, Oxford ed. And see his arguments against "numbers sanctifying the crime." See also Hom. 19. p. 301.

pline of our own Church, forbidding the clergy to administer the holy communion to those, who persist in nourishing feelings of malice and hatred in their hearts.

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XLI.
See Rubric
to Commun.
Service.

If the Christian seeks for a scriptural rule for the regulation of his temper, so that he fall not under the condemnation of this law, he will find one in the writings of the Apostle Paul ; a rule, applicable to all classes and to all ages : and the principle of the rule is given as well. “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice : and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Eph. iv. 31,
32.

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Commandment VII.

EXODUS XX. 14.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

LECTURE XLII. IN touching upon the sins forbidden by this commandment, it would be affectation in either the preacher or the writer, to pretend to be insensible to the difficulties of his subject. It is one of peculiar delicacy, and seems, by almost general consent, to be banished equally from the discourses of the pulpit, and from the investigations of the closet. Yet surely he, who essays to discourse upon the Decalogue, would imply, by omission, or even by scanty notice of this portion of God's law, that there is an important part of the Scriptures which, so far as public teaching is concerned, is not, in the language of St. Paul, “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

2 Tim. iii.
16.

Are, then, the crimes forbidden by the seventh commandment uncommon amongst us? Is their commission scouted by the universal consent of all professing Christians, as dishonourable towards God, and disgraceful to human nature? Is that nature so purified by the sublime morality of the Gospel, as to feel neither the temptation to desire, nor the daring to commit the sins of impurity? Has refinement in outward speech produced a corresponding inward purity of heart? If the contrary to all this be the notorious daily practice of the professed disciples of Christ,—then, beyond all controversy, does the minister of Christ forget and forego his sworn duty both to God and man, if false delicacy, or over-nice scruples, render him backward in touching upon transgressions, the end of which the voice of God has, many times, pronounced

to be damnation. Fearfully does he trifle with his ordination LECTURE XLII. vows,—sinfully does he neglect the welfare of souls,—if human motives so far influence him, as to make him disregard the Lord's commission, "Cry aloud, spare not,—lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." The rejoicing of St. Paul, at the close of a long and laborious ministerial career in the Churches of Asia, was the testimony of a good conscience, that he had "kept back nothing that was profitable unto them." He called them to record, that he was "pure from the blood of all men, for he had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God." Equally pure on this head must he be, who has received his commission to declare that counsel through the transmitted authority of the Apostles. There must be now, as then, no shrinking from putting forth the mind and words of God in this respect; "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Isa. lviii. 1.

Acts xx.
20—27.

Gal. v. 21.

The thing forbidden by this commandment is, impurity in thought, and word, and deed;—the thing enjoined is, to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul:" the principle of this abstinence being the remembrance, that, inasmuch as our bodies are "members of Christ," and "temples of the Holy Ghost," so "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."

1 Pet. ii. 11.

1 Cor. vi.

15. 19.

1 Cor. iii.

16.

1 Thess. iv.
7.

A very slight acquaintance with the manners and customs of the heathen world will prove to us, how little the sins of impurity, as such, were regarded by them; and how totally devoid they were of any notion of abstaining from them upon principle. Adultery and violation, it is true, have, in many cases, been visited with the extreme penalties of the law, and with the opprobrium of society:—but why?—simply because they were offences against that society;—causes of disunion,—of jealousy,—of bloodshed; and therefore to be discountenanced by a legislator, who had the peace of the community at heart¹. They were never looked upon as offences against God;

¹ Aristotle condemns adultery as a crime altogether disgraceful. De Repub. vii. c. 16. And Augustus "applied to this domestic offence," says Gibbon, "the animadversion of the laws; and the guilty parties, after the payment of heavy forfeitures and fines, were condemned to long or perpetual exile in two

LECTURE XLII. for not only were the heathen ignorant of any divine law upon the matter, but they could appeal to the example of many of their supposed gods, to justify almost every one of the crimes, which might be brought within the scope of this commandment. Fornication was so far from being looked upon as a sin in the Gentile world, that the law laid no effectual restraint against its commission. On this point, at least, the most polished nations of antiquity were indeed "past feeling," and gave "themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." How melancholy is the review which the Apostle Paul takes of Gentile profligacy; a review, amply borne out by the polygamy of one nation, the legalized prostitution of another, the promiscuous concubinage of a third, and the unbridled licentiousness of all! Egypt was no exception to this rule; and, often as the children of Israel must have seen the laxity with which the marriage vow was regarded by their taskmasters, and the little esteem in which female chastity was held, even by the highest classes², —it was at once a necessary and merciful caution, on the part of God, to set them right on these matters,—to teach them, that impurity was hateful in His sight; destructive to the soul, by wasting its best energies upon passions which belong to the animal alone; disgraceful to the body, by polluting that structure, which God had destined to be the tabernacle of His own indwelling Spirit.

Nor was this expression of God's abhorrence of these sins limited to the simple command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." That the Jews might not plead ignorance as to the full mind of Jehovah in this respect, (although there had been passages in the history of their forefathers, which might

separate islands." Ch. 44. vol. 8. p. 99. ed. 1819. Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, highly as they esteemed chastity, both in married and single life, visited its violation with a pecuniary fine alone. Sharon Turner's History, b. vii. c. 8. p. 75, &c.; Soames's Bampton Lect. Sermon. ii. p. 117.

² The story of one king of Egypt, Rhampsinitus, prostituting his daughter to gratify his curiosity and revenge,—and that of another, Cheops, following his example, to fill his exhausted coffers and to furnish money to build the Pyramids, will occur to every classical reader. Although these instances of profligacy occurred after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, they serve to shew the degraded state in which their taskmasters must have been, to have tolerated iniquities so horrible, at any period of their history.

See Lect.
xiv. p. 151.

Chrysost.
Hom. xii. in
1 Cor. iv. 6.
s. 9.

Ephes. iv.
19.
Rom. i. 21—
32.
Herod. Clio.
135. 196.
199.
Melp. 180.

Euterpe,
111. 121.
126.

have pointed it out most clearly to them,) punishments of the most awful character were denounced against the violation of the marriage vow,—the worst crime comprehended in this commandment: “The adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death.” And, whilst the male offender was not suffered to escape the penalty, due to his violation of this law of God and of society, the partner of his guilt was deemed “a curse among her people.” The other avenues to these transgressions were guarded with equal care; and the laws, respecting uncleanness of every kind, were of a peculiarly stringent description. Indeed, when we find God’s own voice declaring idolatry to be spiritual fornication, we can have but little doubt as to the degree of guilt, attached to sins of this class by the sentence of the Almighty.

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See Gen. xii. 17. and xx. 3. Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22.

Numb. v. 27.

Lev. xxi. 9.

Deut. xxiii. 17. Exod. xxxiv. 16.

But the evil passions of men were stronger than the fears of vengeance, or the respect for ordinances; and the frequent transgressions of the people of Israel, despite of expostulations the most urgent, and chastisements the most severe, afford abundant proof of the justice of God’s heavy censure upon them,—“I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people.”

Deut. ix. 13.

But holier lessons were in store both for Jew and Gentile, and a stricter rule to be applied to the licentiousness of the wedded, and the unscrupulous profligacy of the single. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” Such were the words of God our Saviour, at the very outset of His ministerial office. A new doctrine indeed,—and one, hard for the self-indulgent Jew to bear; but one, nevertheless, identified as much with the best interests of society, as with the purity of the mind and manners. It nips sin in the bud, by checking the very first emotions of impure desire; and, as far as laws, either human or divine, can effect such a work in the stubborn heart of man, it prevents the act by cutting down the cause.

Matt. v. 27, 28. See also xv. 19, 20.

Still stronger is the language of the Apostles,—speaking as they did to Gentiles, who had been accustomed, even the best of them, to regard the gratification of the sensual appetite as perfectly allowable, provided they stopped short of

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outraging the decencies of society, and risking its peace by the commission of adultery. There is scarcely a single epistle, certainly not one addressed to Gentiles, in which St. Paul does not condemn the indulgence of the lusts of the flesh, as utterly incompatible with the profession of the Christian. "Be not deceived,"—he writes to the converts whom he had made in Corinth, a city which, to a proverb, was peculiarly addicted to the sins of uncleanness,—“neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” And again, to the same people and in the self-same chapter, “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” Other sins, is the Apostle’s meaning, leave at least a man’s person uncontaminated, however they may, in their effects, be injurious to his mind: but this is a sin which degrades the body, whilst it destroys the soul. The Apostle is careful to add the reason: “what?” he continues, “know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price.” And he had previously told them, “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.” St. Paul well knew, that no sins so entirely take possession of a man, so deaden the affections of the soul to Godward, so blot out the line which the Creator has drawn between man and the mere animal, as those of impurity. In other words, no sins so effectually drive out the regenerating Spirit of purity, which in greater or less degree is given to every man as a sacred trust, not only to retain uncontaminated, but to improve. Well, then, might he add, “therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” “This is the will of God,” he says to the Thessalonians, “even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication;—for God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness:” distinctly thus declaring, that the sanctifying Spirit cannot co-exist with the spirit of fornication. Again, to the Ephesians, “Fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once *named* amongst you, as becometh saints. For this ye *know*,” he continues, “that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” So too he tells the

1 Cor. vi. 9,
10.

Ib. 18. 20.

1 Cor. iii.
17.See Lect. v.
p. 45.1 Cor. vi. 20.
See also
Titus i. 15.1 Thess. iv.
3. 7.Ephes. v.
3. 5.
See also
v. 12.

Colossians, that these are amongst the sins, for which “the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:” and to the Galatians he says, “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” To his own countrymen his words are simple and concise; “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” Nor does this Apostle stand alone in his solemn condemnation of licentiousness; for St. Peter uses, in effect, precisely the same language, and adopts the same arguments.

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XLII.Coloss. iii.
5, 6.
Galat. v. 21.Heb. xiii. 4.
See also
Rom. xiii.
13, 14.1 Pet. ii. 11.
2 Pet. ii.
9, 10.
Lect. v.
p. 46.

But there is a testimony yet to come, if possible, of a still more awful character. It was given by that holy man of God, the beloved of his Master Christ, who was permitted to anticipate the knowledge which sooner or later awaits us all, and to see, whilst yet alive, the certain portion of the dead hereafter. It was God Himself who told him, in this mysterious revelation, that “the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.” Classed as the lusts of the flesh are here with sins of the deepest and the deadliest dye, why should we doubt that the slaves of those wild and evil passions will be shut out from that heavenly Jerusalem, wherein those alone are permitted to enter, who keep and do the commandments of the Lord? “Without,” says St. John, “are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” Now it is absolutely impossible, for the most perverse mind to explain away these words, or for the most illiterate to mistake their meaning. Utter exclusion from the kingdom of heaven will hereafter be the portion of the adulterer, the fornicator, and the sensualist;—eternal banishment from God’s presence, eternal misery with the devil and his angels;—untold millions of years passed with the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched;—these are the certain consequences of giving the rein to our rebellious passions! Believe but the Bible,—only call yourself a Christian,—and from this conclusion it is impossible to escape.

Rev. xxi. 8.

Ib. xxii. 15.

But what does the world, the Christian world, say to this

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view of the question; not in words,—for the tongue can make any profession it pleases,—but in practice?—what sentence does it pass upon the indulgence of those passions which, as God and God's inspired ones declare, ensure, if persisted in, (not endanger only,) the damnation of the soul? It is true, that the grave sentence of the law will punish the adulterer, if there be evidence to convict him,—but not as a Christian,—only as a member of society;—not with the heavy censure, not with the deep disgrace of the primitive days of the Church,—but with a pecuniary fine, and that proportioned to the fortune of the criminal, rather than to the extent and consequences of his crime. Time was, when the severest punishments were inflicted upon each sex for adultery and fornication. It is admitted by the infidel and licentious Gibbon, that in the primitive Church, under the Christian emperors, “the laws of Moses were received as the divine original of justice, and the Christian princes adapted their penal statutes to the degrees of moral and religious turpitude. Adultery was first declared to be a capital offence: the frailty of the sexes was assimilated to poison, or assassination, to sorcery, or parricide³.” Councils, preachers, fathers, all united in the defence of chastity: nay, so careful were they to put down not the sins of impurity alone, but all that might lead to their commission, that riot, and intemperance, and debauchery, as incentives to lust, were punished with the severest censures of the Church, and, in some instances, even with excommunication. How different the sentence of the modern Christian world, inheritor though it is of the wisdom and experience of by-gone ages! The convicted adulterer is looked upon, even in the highest circles, more as the successful gallant, than as the degraded sinner, with God's recorded brand of infamy upon him. He can lord it amongst the proudest of the land; the interests of kingdoms, the framing of laws, the appointment to the highest offices, both in Church and state, may be committed to his charge:—let him pay but the fine that the law has put upon his sin, and, though he may return to his

Gibbon,
c. xliv.
vol. viii.
p. 101.
ed. 1819.

Bingham,
b. xvi. c. 11.
s. 15.

³ The Emperor Constantine made the punishment of adultery the same as that of parricide. The criminals were either burnt alive, or enclosed in a sack with a serpent, an ape, a cock, and a dog, and then flung into a river or the sea. Bingham, b. xvi. c. 11. s. 2.

associates poorer in pocket, yet it would seem, (if we may judge by the usages of modern society,) that no abiding stain is fixed upon his character. Some harsh moralists, it is true, may frown upon his misdeeds; some, who have not yet learnt to obey fashion rather than God, may stand aloof from him: but, in the eyes of the worldly, he is just as good a member of society as he was before; and in their estimation, perhaps, just as good a Christian too. Is this the conduct of a Christian nation? are these the habits, these the counsels, that are likely to draw down God's blessing upon a people, where such abominations are tolerated and practised with impunity? If so,—then were the Jews harshly treated. If so,—then there must be some mistake in our interpretation of the simple language of the Apostle, and words have lost their meaning.

There are other flagrant violations of this commandment which, in the case of the male sex at least,—condemned as they are by God,—meet with but little censure in some classes of a so-called Christian society, unless circumstances of a peculiarly disgraceful nature are attached to them: such are the seduction of innocence, and habitual companionship with the most degraded of the female sex. And mark the inconsistency in the human award of censure to different crimes! The seducer practises much the same arts to entice his unwary victim into his power, that the swindler does to rob you of your goods or money. The swindler is hunted from the society of gentlemen, as a pest, and a disgrace: all men shun him;—his very presence is a contamination;—he is left unpitied to the vengeance of the law. But there are those,—aye, and high born and high bred gentlemen too, who will laugh with, and even applaud the despoiler of female innocence:—and whilst the poor victim of his treachery,—tempted, most commonly, to her fall, by the tenderest feelings of our nature,—whilst she, from the hour of her detection, is consigned to indelible disgrace, and driven, perhaps for the remainder of her life, as an outcast from the company of the virtuous,—he, who beguiled her to her shame, is received as before into the good favour of the world; and “a little gallantry” is the heaviest censure, which even female lips will sometimes apply to the dishonour he has done to their sex, and the outrage he has committed against the laws of their Redeemer. It is rewarding

LECTURE the robber, and punishing the despoiled. The Jewish law was
 XLII. more consistent,—it punished both ⁴.

As for the sin of habitual fornication,—it is one unhappily so common, so much the result of an age highly and luxuriously civilized, as to attract but little notice, and certainly to call down a very qualified censure, even from many sober-thinking people. Young men, they will say, have impetuous feelings and strong passions, and the ebullitions of the one, and the gratification of the other, are not, it is argued, to be regarded with so very strict an eye: they are venial trespasses, it is urged; and the time will come, when they will know better, and see their folly. But we have seen already that, to argue thus, a man must cast off all belief in the Scriptures; for they tell us, as plainly as words can speak, that these “venial trespasses” ensure *only* the everlasting damnation of the soul!—and it is worse than pitiful trifling, it is outraging God’s forbearance, for the sinner to say, “At some future time I will abandon them.” There is no small peril in continuing to sin, because grace *may* abound. God’s long-suffering *may* be tasked too far: and it is perfectly possible, for the fornicator to be cut off in the midst of his compromise between present indulgence and future reformation,—and to awake, when too late, to find that God was in earnest, when He said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay;” and that the hell, of which he has heard so much and recked so little, is indeed no fable, but a stern and an eternal reality!

Little as male chastity has been in fashion at any period of the world’s history, (though God, in His condemnation of unchastity, has made no distinction of sex,) it is a melancholy sign of the times to find, that, amongst the lower classes at least, the value once set upon female purity is on the wane. There was a time, when to be the mother of an illegitimate child, was considered a disgrace through life;—but the frequency of the sight, in these latter days, has taken off the edge of the infamy; and, provided that marriage solders up the shame,—it is but little thought of in after-life. God forbid, that we should be so uncharitable as to dwell with

Rom. xii.
19.

See Chrysos.
Hom. xxiv.
in Rom. xiii.
13, 14.

⁴ See an admirable Sermon on this subject by Bishop Horsley, Sermon 43, on 1 John iii. 3.

undue severity upon sins long since passed, and, perhaps too, long since repented of. The Lord forbid, that we should presume ourselves to deny that forgiveness to this, or any sin, which He has promised to all who repent and truly turn to Him! But may the Lord forbid as well, that, in our fear of being uncharitable, we should be deceivingly neglectful; neglectful to say that, in either sex, these are sins, not to be abandoned only, but to be repented of with strong crying and tears,—to be bewailed, as transgressions against the majesty and purity of God! We must feel no delicacy in warning those whom Divine Providence has committed to our charge, that if, by the ordinances both of God and man, the extreme penalties of the law are awarded to the murderers of the perishable body,—it cannot be, that the destroyer of the immortal soul is guiltless in the sight of Him, who died to compass its sanctification and redemption. The ministers of Christ,—though they have the glorious privilege of preaching salvation through Him to the returning prodigal,—though it is theirs to tell, that God “will in no wise cast out” them that come to Him through Jesus Christ, but that angels “re-
John vi. 37.
 joice over one sinner that repenteth,”—have a duty, that goes
Luke xv. 10.
 hand in hand with this their privilege;—it is, to remember
 that “they watch for souls, as they that must give account.”
Heb. xiii. 17.
 They then, of all men, must not be backward in solemnly declaring, as a proven truth, that, if the animal passions of any man are confessedly stronger than his sense of Christian duty,—he is not converted unto God,—he has not gained the great end of his existence,—he has not cast in his lot with Christ,—he has not fulfilled the will of God, even his sanctification: but he has “crucified to himself the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame,”—he has trodden
Heb. vi. 6.
 Him under foot, and “counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.”
Heb. x. 29.

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;” and it is sporting with our eternal interests to heed
Ib. 31.
 what the world may think, or what its customs may sanction. Our business is with the recorded word of God: *that*, and that alone, is the unerring standard both of faith and duty.

By His rules we shall be tried,—by His laws we shall be

LECTURE ^{XLII.} judged: and, with these for our guidance, we may safely ask,
—whatever may be the supposed gains or real delights of the
adulterer, the seducer, or the fornicator,—“what is a man
profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own
soul?”

Matt. xvi.
26.

LECTURE XLIII.

Commandment VIII.

Exod. xx. 15.

“Thou shalt not steal.”

To this day the Egyptians retain many of their old propensities and habits: they, as well as their Arabian neighbours, are as notorious now, as they were of old, for thieving, cheating, and pilfering. It was doubtless to place a regard for property on the holiest ground, and to teach the Israelites to unlearn the lessons with which they had been defiled in their captivity;—it was to make as wide a difference as possible between the principles of the people of God, and the opinions of heathen nations who thought robbery no wrong,—nay, in some instances commendable,—that the command was given, “Thou shalt not steal.”

In the Mosaic law, a wide difference was made in the punishment awarded to theft, and to the sins comprised under the last commandment. Whilst adultery and unchastity were punishable with death, as offences against God’s holiness as well as man’s personal purity, restitution and fine were the only penalties imposed upon the thief. There was one exception to this rule. Manstealing,—the kidnapping, that is, of a free-born Israelite, and using him or selling him as a slave,—was death. Thus early did the Almighty express His abhorrence of seizing, and selling to slavery, the free-born person of man.

Christian laws pass a different sentence; and Christian customs form a different estimate of the relative guilt of the sins against purity, and those against property. Whilst the convicted adulterer, the known fornicator, the proud seducer, can each and all make their way without denial into the first

LECTURE
XLIII.

Diod. Sic.
Lib. 1.
Walpole’s
Memoirs,
vol. ii.
p. 281.

Thucyd. i.
c. 5. 7.

Exod. xxii.
1—4.

Exod. xxi.
16.
Deut. xxiv.
7.

LECTURE society,—the suspected thief must take a lower grade, and be
 XLIII. content to herd with the most debased amongst his species :
 and thus the high born, high bred Christian, indulgent to those frailties to which he inclines, and severe upon those to which he feels no especial temptation, makes the safety of the purse of more value than the innocence of the soul ;—forgetting, it would seem, that the highest crime in the sight of the Almighty must needs be that, to which He Himself has awarded the highest penalty. It would be well for the peace of Christian society,—well too for the individual soul's eternal welfare, were it as disgraceful not to keep the body in “temperance, soberness, and chastity,” as not to keep the hands from “picking and stealing !” And it is well that the direct act of theft is so plainly disgraceful, and so universally reprobated by every one, in the smallest degree deserving the name of Christian, as to need but little argument to prove its infamy. “Theft is punished by thy law, O God,” says St. Augustine, “and the law written in the hearts of men, which iniquity itself effaces not.” And indeed human expostulations would be of little avail in reforming the thief, if the conscience were dead to the divine command, “Thou shalt not steal.”

August.
 Confess.
 b. 2. s. 9.

It is not, then, to the master-sin that our chief remarks need be directed; but rather to those every-day offences which, though not so outwardly scandalous, are yet indicative of a very loose code of morality, are still violations of the injunction to be “true and just in all our dealings,” and are certainly incompatible, both with the straightforward honesty that becomes the Christian, and with the singleness of purpose, that is so essentially a part of his true character.

It would, perhaps, both startle and offend the careless spendthrift, were you to tell him that, in the sight of God, he is a thief: yet such is in fact the case. The prodigal glosses over his unthinking profusion with the name of liberality; he persuades others, and probably argues himself into the belief, that he is correct in his opinion. But there is this wide distinction between the prodigal and the liberal man:—the one will give indiscriminately to the right and the left; he makes no distinction of persons or of objects; the worthless come in for an equal share of his bounty with the deserving. He will give as readily to the lazy mendicant, as to the

indigent, hard-working artizan. The depraved haunts of licentiousness and debauchery are as open to his patronage, as the Church, the school, or the benevolent institution. The love of giving,—the love of applause,—the love of ostentation,—these are his chief motives: and, to gratify them, he will not pause to consider, whether it is, strictly speaking, his own money he is spending,—or that, in reality, of his creditors; for the prodigal is always an embarrassed man. The liberal man, on the contrary, is just, and careful, and prudent, that he may have to spend upon deserving objects, and for the furtherance of useful purposes: “The good man sheweth favour, and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with discretion.” His principle of giving is a recognition of the great truth, that he is but the steward of his Master’s bounty: that his riches are lent to him on trust; not to squander indiscriminately on the worthless, but to act as God’s privileged minister, and almoner;—to further, as far as may be, those great designs, which the Scriptures tell him are identified as much with God’s eternal honour, as with his fellow-Christian’s everlasting welfare. How many an industrious tradesman may date his ruin, from unwarily giving unlimited credit to the prodigal, who will suffer nothing to stand in the way between his desire and its accomplishment! Credit is obtained, no matter how or where: it is never for one moment a question with him, whether the tradesman can afford to give it,—nor whether he has the present or prospective means of payment. How many a wife or child has to mourn over a family fallen, an estate alienated, hopes, affections, prospects blighted;—and all this accumulated misery arising from the selfish profusion of one unchristian spendthrift! Is there no robbery here,—no dishonesty,—to suffer his darling propensity to make a wreck of the dearest interests committed to his charge? to clutch at money that he may squander, as eagerly as the niggard that he may hoard?

Of the same description is the gambler. He has many points of character in common with the prodigal. Mercenary in his calling,—covetous in feeling,—reckless of every tie that binds him to his God, or to his fellows,—fevered in mind,—worn in body,—how can this man be said to employ either his time, his talents, or his money, in advancing his own

Ps. cxii. 5.

LECTURE XLIII. soul's welfare, or in performing his Maker's bidding? Alas! how can the Christian eye contemplate the gambler, without having before it the searching question of Christ, "If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" There can be no innocence in that calling, which begins in a craving thirst for excitement beyond the ordinary routine of Christian duties, and lawful worldly occupations; that involves, in its progress, desertion of God, loss of those precious hours which are given us, to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," neglect of kindred, abandonment of station;—that will stake, not its victim's whole property only, but that of others too, upon the turn of a die, or the toss of a card,—whose end is always ruin, and not unfrequently self-destruction.

Luke xvi.
11.

Phil. ii. 12.

Of fraud there are so many species, all coming under the prohibition of this commandment, that it is quite beyond the scope of these treatises to enumerate them. Some few, however, may be noticed, for the sake of illustration.

Prov. xi. 1.
Micah vi. 10.
See, also,
Lev. xix.
35, 36.
Deut. xxv.
16.

Prov. xx.
14.

There is the "false balance," which is called in Scripture "abomination to the Lord;" and the "scant measure," that He equally abhorreth. There is the unjust depreciation of an article really good, and the attempt to gain it at a price below its worth:—a mingled system this of deceit and of oppression, which was just as common in the days of Solomon as now; "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth." There is the careless work, or the waste of property on the part of the servant, which is a fraud upon the master;—and the overtaking of the labourer, or the withholding his just demand, which is a fraud upon the servant. There is the petty every day cheating, in buying and selling,—the borrowing money, or contracting debts, without the thought or power of payment;—the breach of trust,—the violation of contract,—the aiding others to cheat and plunder,—and the receiving of stolen goods, (which our law condemns as of equal guilt with theft itself,)—the taking advantage of others' need, or poverty, or depression, to exact more from them than is just or due; the aiding or abetting in any of these crimes against society, are treasons against God. How fearful is this catalogue of the every day sins of those, who call themselves Christians, and who profess, in

theory at least, to take the Gospel for their guide, and its principles as their standard !

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But there are other practices, which the Christian eye can plainly see, are violations of the command, "thou shalt not steal;"—some of which, if they are not actually sanctioned by the customs of society, are yet practised without scandal by thousands, whose education might have taught them better, and whose sense of honour would deter them from downright theft; whilst others are as openly and unblushingly advocated, and scruples of conscience even pleaded in behalf of their commission.

It seems to be almost a received axiom, in matters of buying and selling, that horse-dealing is a mere trial of wits, and not to be conducted upon the same broad principles of equity, as other objects of sale or barter. If you went into a respectable tradesman's shop to purchase an article, describing exactly the kind of thing you wished to have, you would think yourself hardly used, and would consider your tradesman a tricky and dishonest man, if, upon use, you found your purchase the reverse of what it was represented to be,—full of defects studiously concealed, devoid of qualities for which you bargained. You would be right in your conclusion, and no one could blame you for forming it. And yet there are many,—it is an every day affair,—with birth, rank, education, and means, far beyond the tradesman, who will pride themselves upon doing that which he would blush to think of,—namely, deceiving the unwary, passing off, as full of good qualities, that which they know to be full of defects; or, which is as bad, concealing faults such as, if known, would effectually mar the purchase, or depreciate the value. Why truth should be almost proverbially banished from horse-dealing,—why in that, straightforwardness, candour, honour, and honesty, all may be absent without disgrace,—and how all this is not robbery,—it would sorely task the keenest casuist to discover, if the question were to be decided by the only laws which should govern a Christian society, namely, those of the Bible ! It would seem reasonable, that they who, in all dealings between man and man, refuse to abide by the test which God has given them, should resign at the same time all right to the title of His obedient and peculiar children.

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Smuggling, or in any way defrauding the revenue, is a sin of the same character.—We owe the state a debt, for the protection we receive from her power and her laws. If we refuse to pay that debt, or if we endeavour to evade it, we rob the state. And yet the same man, who would scorn to steal from or cheat his neighbour,—the same man, who would scrupulously pay his debts, and defraud no individual of his just dues, will think it no sin to plunder his country of a portion of her revenue. It would be hard to say, which is the worst of the two,—the smuggler by trade, who defrauds the revenue in order, as he says, to live, and who can see no such very great harm in so doing,—or he who purchases in order to economize, by procuring an article for a less sum than he could have done from the honest tradesman, and who thus encourages the sin of others. At least we may safely say, if there were no purchasers, there would be no smugglers.

There is, as has been already observed, a species of robbery, for which, on the part of some, scruples of conscience are pleaded as an excuse: this is—robbery of the Church, in denying the payment of tithes, and dues, and rates. To enter into an elaborate discussion upon the question of tithes, would be foreign to our present purpose¹. It will be sufficient to say that, about the ninth century, the wisdom and piety of our forefathers set apart, for ever, the tenth portion of all agricultural produce throughout the kingdom, for the maintenance of the ministers of the Church. It was their's to give—their's to alienate in perpetuity, if so they pleased, from their heirs and successors. They did so by universal consent; and they dedicated it to the service of God, by bestowing it as a free gift upon His Church. Since that time, all land throughout the kingdom (with some few exceptions, under peculiar arrangements, or by repurchase,) has been bequeathed and inherited, bought and sold, let or taken, subject to this deduction: and the Church retains possession of the tenth of the produce by the same right, and in many cases by the same deeds, under which the landlord or proprietor owns the remainder.

This mode of paying the clergy was fixed upon by our

¹ The reader is referred to an excellent article on the subject of tithes in Dr. Farquhar Hook's Church Dictionary.

forefathers, as being most in accordance with the mind of God, who ordained,—that the tenth of the produce of the land should be set apart for the service of the Jewish priesthood. LECTURE
XLIIL.
Num. xviii.
21—24.

Our ancestors in earlier times thought, with a learned son of the Church at a later period, that “Scripture hath left us an example of that particular proportion which for moral considerations hath been thought fittest by Him, whose wisdom could best judge. . . It seemeth, then, in these days, a question altogether vain and superfluous, whether tithes be a matter of divine right : because, howsoever at the first it might have been thought doubtful, our case,” as a Church, “is clearly the same now with theirs, unto whom St. Peter sometime spake, saying, ‘while it was whole, it was wholly thine.’” Acts v. 4.

When our tithes might have probably seemed our own, we had colour of liberty to use them as we ourselves saw good. But having made them His, whose they are, let us be warned by other men’s example, what it is” to purloin, “to wash or clip that coin, which hath on it the mark of God.” Hooker’s
Ecccl. Pol.
b. v. c. 79.
s. 12.

If we are desirous to ascertain the Divine mind on this subject,—if we are really anxious to be satisfied as to whether it is, or is not, a sin in God’s sight, to refuse to pay that which has been set apart for the maintenance of His ministers,—we have but to turn to the pages of the Old Testament, and we shall find such refusal pronounced, not a robbery of man, but a robbery of God. In the days of Malachi there seems to have been some demur of the kind, not proceeding from one or two individuals, but from the whole body of the people ; and thus God expostulates with them, by the mouth of His prophet,—“Will a man rob God?—Yet ye have robbed ME². But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse,” is the awful denunciation of God against this crime, “for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation.” They thought, then, it was a hard matter, to give the tenth of their produce to the priest- Mal. iii. 8, 9.

² It was with a strong recognition of this truth—that to rob the Church is not to rob man but God—that “the style of ancient” ecclesiastical “grants and charters is, ‘We have given unto God both for us, and our heirs for ever ;’ yea, ‘we know,’ saith Charles the Great, ‘that the goods of the Church are the sacred endowments of God. To the Lord our God we offer and dedicate, whatsoever we deliver unto His Church.’” Hooker’s Ecccl. Pol. b. v. c. 79. s. 14.

LECTURE
XLIII.

hood,—who did not, as did they, labour with the hands for their livelihood. Alas ! they forgot, as many do now, the real toils of the ministers of God. They knew not that the labour of the head,—the daily care,—the anxiety,—the hopes disappointed,—the counsels unheeded,—the sight of those under their charge visibly treading the broad path that leadeth to destruction,—are far more really wearing to the body and to the mind, than the heaviest daily labour that ordinarily falls to the lot of man. The charge of souls is no light matter to a tender conscience. But in the degenerate days of Judah they thought otherwise : and there were those, who grudged the priests the patrimony which God had given them,—mainly, it would seem, because they thought they could not afford to give ;—and thus God answers them :—“ Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

Mal. iii. 10.

But, it may be asked, what have we to do with the Jews, and what are these privileges of the Jewish priesthood to us ? Search the New Testament, it is alleged, and you will find no mention of tithes, as being the property of a Christian priesthood. True ; but you will find God's mind to be the same. He is still to the Christian, what He was to the Jew : “ I am the Lord, I change not.” And so Christ declared, that the spiritual labourer was “ worthy of his hire.” St. Paul told his Galatian converts, that he who was “ taught in the word should communicate to him that teacheth,”—and they which “ wait at the altar,” and so are separated from all secular business, “ should be partakers with the altar.” And, in the same place, he tells us, that this is no human law,—no device of the priesthood to secure profit to themselves, no invention of superstition in the hope of propitiating their spiritual directors. But “ *The Lord hath ordained,*” says the Apostle, “ that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.” Thus we perceive it to be an ordinance of God, that His people should maintain those, who are separated from all worldly employments for the purpose of ministering to their spiritual comforts. In a Christian society, the method

Mal. iii. 6.
Luke x. 7, 8.
Matt. x. 10.

Gal. vi. 6.

1 Cor. ix.
13.

1b. 14.

of their maintenance He has left to man. And who will gainsay the correctness of our forefathers' judgment, in deciding upon that, which He Himself appointed for the support of the Jewish priesthood? And who will argue, that there is no sin in denying, upon the plea of conscience, the payment of that which our forefathers thus so sacredly set apart? Who will assert, that there is no robbery in impairing those possessions, which men in former times, when they gave unto holy uses, were wont at the altar of God, and in the presence of their ghostly superiors, to make, as they thought, inviolable by words of fearful execration, saying, "these things we offer to God; from whom if any take them away (which we hope no man will attempt to do), but if any shall, let his account be without favour in the last day, when he cometh to receive the doom which is due for sacrilege against that Lord and God, unto whom we dedicate the same³?"

LECTURE
XLIII.Chrysost.
Hom. iv. in
Ephes. jux.
fin.Hooker, ut
supra, s. 14.

So, too, with regard to Church-rates: there are some, who affect a scruple of conscience against paying them. It is remarkable, that a conscience of this kind is always economical.

We rarely hear, amongst the objectors of this class, of a conscientious compulsion to give for God's service, in any shape;—but when they are called upon to pay for the support of a fabric, which has been set apart for centuries for the worship of God, and where "to the poor the Gospel is preached," "without money, and without price,"—immediately conscience steps in, and says "no" to the demand. How strange that so tender a conscience should either buy or hire a property, when it not only knows that it is chargeable

Luke iv. 18.
Isa. lv. 1.

³ The wholesale plunder that took place at the Reformation, under the shallow pretext of doing God a service, by depriving the Church of a property which, it was said, ecclesiastics had abused, met with its own reward. "The receivers of the plunder rarely prospered; and it is observed by Sir H. Spelman, about the year 1616, that on comparing the mansion-houses of twenty-four families of gentlemen in Norfolk, with as many monasteries, all standing together at the dissolution, and all lying within a ring of twelve miles the semi-diameter, he found the former still possessed by the lineal descendants of their original occupants in every instance: whilst the latter, with two exceptions only, had flung out their owners again and again, some six times over, none less than three, through sale, through default of issue, and very often through great and grievous disasters." Blunt on the Reformation, c. viii. p. 145; History and Fate of Sacrilege, p. 243; and Pref. to "De non temerand. Eccl'es." p. 23; South's Sermons, vol. i. p. 183-6. Oxf. ed. 1823.

LECTURE XLIII. with such a payment,—but that even a consideration has been made, in the purchase-money or the lease, on account of this lien upon it!

Let human casuistry or human selfishness argue upon the matter as it may, there is here, too, a violation of the real spirit of God's injunction, "Thou shalt not steal." Earnestly, then, will the Christian endeavour to be true and just in *all* his dealings;—not selecting his points of honesty, as caprice or expediency may dictate, but striving, according to his Master's precepts, "to render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's;" and so to act up to the Apostle's rule, "To render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom;

Matt. xxii.
21.

Rom. xiii. 7. fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

LECTURE XLIV.

Commandment IX.

EXODUS xx. 16.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

A PROPENSITY to lying has been always, more or less, a peculiar feature in the character of an enslaved people. Accustomed to oppression of every kind, and to be called upon to render strict account for every trifle done, not according to the rules of justice, but as the caprice of their masters may suggest,—it is little to be wondered at, if a lie is often resorted to as a supposed refuge from punishment, and that thus an habitual disregard of truth is engendered. To suppose that some such habit was one amongst the many evils, resulting from the oppressions imposed upon the Israelites in Egypt, is to say no more, than that they were not free from the common infirmities of humanity. However this may be, the severe laws enacted against the crimes of false witness, and the as severe reprobation passed upon those of lying and slandering, (the three principal sins forbidden by this commandment,) would lead us to suspect, that the Jews were in no small degree addicted to them.

The well-being of the community so evidently depends upon the sound administration of the laws, that all nations seem to have united, in affixing a peculiar brand of infamy upon him, who perverts the ends of justice by giving false witness. Even the heathen, whose morality was founded upon expediency alone, could see that falsehood, dishonourable in all cases, was especially so in this. The Mosaic law endeavoured to put a stop to this sin, by inflicting a punishment of a strictly retributive character. The false witness,

LECTURE
XLIV.

Aristot.
Polit. ii. 10.
Juv. Sat.
viii. 80.

LECTURE XLIV. when convicted of his wilful malice, was condemned to suffer an injury, exactly equivalent to that which he intended to put upon his neighbour;—a law, which in the early times of Christianity, was revived by the Emperors Valentinian and Gratian. In those days, the fraudulent informer and the false accuser were looked upon as the “bane of human life, and the common pest of mankind; and they were ordered to be prosecuted to the last degree with confiscation and death.” The ecclesiastical law enjoined them a severe penance. By a canon of the council of Eliberis, “he that bears false witness against another, to the loss of his life or liberty, is not to be received to Communion even at his last hour.” And this stamp of infamy has remained to the present day, though the legal punishment of perjured testimony has been somewhat relaxed, and ecclesiastical censures have altogether been practically set aside. And it has deservedly remained;—for though the force of passion or the vehemence of temptation may be pleaded, in extenuation of other sins to which our fallen nature inclines us,—here all sudden impulse is excluded: the act is wilful and deliberate;—one, to which the sinner must have made up his mind; upon which he must have thought and calculated; and it is one, for which retribution, if it slumbers here, is laid up in store hereafter; for it is written, “A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.”

And the latter part of this declaration of inspired wisdom brings us to the consideration of the second sin, proposed to be viewed in this commandment,—that of lying. It is not because a lie destroys confidence, the great bond of society;—it is not because it is so personally disgraceful, that the term of “liar” is the greatest reproach that can be passed upon man,—the greatest insult that can be offered,—the greatest stigma that can be affixed; it is not because all classes of society unite in standing aloof from the notorious liar, in avoiding even the suspected one, that we would reprobate the sin, and shun the offender. The heathen could do, and did thus much:—there is a more awful reason: it is because a lie is hateful to God, and utterly inconsistent with the Christian character. How fearful is the description given by Jeremiah, in the latter days of Jerusalem, of the utter disrup-

Deut. xix.
16—20.

Bingham,
b. xvi. c. xii.
s. 15.

Bingham,
ut supra,
Concil. Elib.
can. 73.

Prov. xix. 9.

Aristot.
Eth. iv. 7.
Prov. vi.
16, 17;
xii. 22.
1 John ii.
21.

tion of all bonds of society, as well as of God's abhorrence of their national disregard of truth; "They be all adulterers," saith the Lord, speaking by the mouth of His prophet; "an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongue like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not Me, saith the Lord. Take ye heed, every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. . . Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait. Shall not I visit them for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Words more strongly indicative of God's present abhorrence of lying lips, and of His future determination to punish them, could not well be uttered.

Jer. ix. 2—9.

Nor do these passages stand alone in the Old Testament: many of a similar character, especially in the latter days of Israel, might be adduced, all breathing the self-same spirit of condemnation of the liar. The Apostle Paul has passed a heavy sentence against the little regard for truth, that his Gentile flock appear to have had before their conversion, in the nature of his appeal to the Ephesians and Colossians. He reminds each, that they have put off "the old man,"—the lusts, the propensities, and consequent condemnation of their unregenerate nature; "and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." In each case, the inference drawn by the Apostle from their changed hopes and views is, "Lie not one to the other;" as if a love of truth were the very foundation of Christian principle, or, at least, inseparable from a profession of the Gospel. And, remembering who is declared by Christ to be "the father of lies," it needs no argument to prove, that the liar violates that part of his baptismal vow, in which he covenants to "renounce the devil and all his works."

Prov. xix. 5.
9. 22; xiv. 5.
Jer. i. 36;
xxvii. 10. 16.
Isa. xxviii.
15. 17.
Ezek. xiii.
9. 19.
Hosea vii.
13.
Amos ii. 4.
Nahum iii.
1, &c.

Col. iii. 9,
10.
Eph. iv. 22,
25.

John viii. 44.

There are many ways of lying, besides the wilful and deliberate falsehood,—ways which, though they vary in degree,

LECTURE and in extent of mischief, if not of criminality, yet all come
 XLIV. under the same head of departing from the truth, either knowingly and deliberately, or from want of regard for the importance of veracity for its own intrinsic value. In the front of these deviations stands equivocation; a sin, which perhaps is even worse than a direct lie, as it is tricked out in the garb of a love for truth. The equivocator only wants the requisite portion of animal courage, to be the liar. There is a profession of declaring the whole truth, but a wilful suppression of a part, and, generally speaking, the most important part,—that which, if honestly spoken, would give a new turn to the facts or circumstances to which it refers¹.

There is a method of relating facts, so as to give them a very different aspect from the true one: and there are two motives for doing this; one, arising from a malicious desire to injure another, by depreciating his character, and by misinterpreting his words and actions;—another, springing from an innate vain love of the marvellous, that delights in highly colouring a simple narrative, and can scarcely relate the commonest incident without exaggeration or embellishment. This is a most extensive field of falsehood, and a most dangerous one withal: for, as truth (perhaps a well-known fact or two) is made the groundwork of the tale, it requires more patience and acuteness, than most men possess or are willing to exercise, to disentangle truth from falsehood, and to place the narrative in its proper light. The first of these two methods, when its malice is undetected, is the liar's triumph; it is the mastery of his art: he knows well, that the intermixture of truth disarms suspicion on the part of the candid, and gives a sanction to ready belief on the part of the malevolent. With regard to the other practice,—as it is supposed to injure nobody, so it seldom meets with the reprobation it deserves; and the opinion of man too frequently palliates a vicious habit, and calls that a love of the marvellous, which the voice of God would call, an utter indifference to the holy cause of truth. A lie is a lie, however convenience, fashion, or caprice, may endeavour to soften the harshness of the word. At least we may say of this, as of every bad habit,

¹ On equivocation, see Jeremy Taylor's Rule of Conscience, b. iii. c. ii. rule v. quest. iii.

if indulged, it will gradually gain such ascendancy over the mind, as not only to render a man indifferent, whether he speaks truth or falsehood, but almost incapable of discerning between them. "White lies," says Paley, "always introduce others of a darker complexion. I have seldom known any one who deserted truth in trifles, that could be trusted in matters of importance. Nice distinctions are out of the question, upon occasions, which, like those of speech, return every hour. The habit therefore, of lying, when once formed, is easily extended, to serve the designs of malice or interest. Like all habits, it spreads indeed of itself."

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Paley's
Moral Phil.
b. iii. p. 1.
c. 15.

It was an evil hour for the Church of Christ, when it departed from the simple rule of the Apostles, and tampered with the holy cause of truth, in the hope that the end proposed, namely, the recommendation of Christianity, might justify the unscriptural nature of the means. In this system they followed the example of the Gentile philosophers, in the vain hope of converting many to the faith. "The Platonists and Pythagoreans held it as a maxim, that it was not only lawful, but even praiseworthy, to deceive, and even to use the expedient of a lie, in order to advance the cause of truth and piety. The Jews, who lived in Egypt, had learned and received this maxim from them, before the coming of Christ, as appears incontestably from a multitude of ancient records; and the Christians were infected from both these sources with the same pernicious error, as appears from the number of books attributed falsely to great and venerable names—from the Sibylline verses, and several supposititious productions which were spread abroad in this and the following century."

Mosheim,
Cent. ii. p. ii.
c. iii. s. 15.
See also
Paley, ut
supra.
Burton's
Lect. on
Ecc. Hist.
xix.
p. 152-3.

Later ages reaped the harvest of this ungodly seed; and the pious frauds of the second century paved the way for the pretended miracle, the fabulous legend, and the priestly imposture of subsequent times;—until the monks of the middle ages, the only professors of learning in that dark period, practised upon the credulity of their hearers, with a boldness and a success akin to that of the subtle priesthood of Egypt, in earlier times. Well might it be said, that "Christianity has suffered more injury from this cause, than from all other causes put together." It is to no purpose to say, in defence of these frauds, that, as the design was to gain a reli-

Paley, ut
supra.
See also
Hallam's
Middle
Ages,
vol. iii. c. ix.
p. 1. p. 348
—350.

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Burnet on
Art. xix., on
the publica-
tion of the
pretended
decretal
epistles.
Jer. Taylor,
on the right
of sure con-
science,
rule vi.
vol. xi. 483.
Heber's ed.
Jer. Taylor's
Dissuasive
from Popery,
part i. c. iii.
s. 1.

Burnet on
Art. xxvi.
Concil.
Trid. Sess.
vii. can. xi.
Catech. ad
ordin. pt. ii.
s. i.
Jer. Taylor's
Dissuasive
from Popery,
part i.
c. iii. s. 1.
p. 249.

gious ascendancy over the minds of the people, and as no harm was intended by them, so they were innocent in the sight of God. "It is not lawful," replies Bishop Taylor to arguments of a similar character, "to tell a lie for God and for truth; because God will not be served by that which He hates, and there are no defects in truth which need such violent remedies."

Equally indefensible is the well-known and avowed position of the Romish Church, that no faith is to be kept with heretics, (provided that the interests of the Church require its violation,) and the doctrine of the lawfulness of mental reservation,—which is pushed so far, that even the validity of the sacrament of the Eucharist is made to depend upon the secret intention of the priest. Nay, to such an extent is this carried, that "no contracts, leagues, societies, promises, vows, or oaths, are a sufficient security to him that deals with one of the Church of Rome, if he shall please to make use of that liberty which may, and many times is, and always can be granted to him." A heavy censure this, and a fearful blot upon that Church, which arrogates to herself the exclusive right to the title of Christ's Holy Catholic Church: and yet recent circumstances have proved the truth of the accusation; and that the most binding oaths can be evaded by those, whose selfishness and ambition render them indisposed to keep them.

It is in childhood that a habit of lying is very commonly formed:—it is in that seed-time of life that the tares are very often sown, whilst parents and instructors are asleep; and then, in after years, the bitter fruit of early negligence is too painfully evident, in a confirmed disregard of truth. Remembering that our little ones are given to us by God in trust, that we may exercise the privilege of training up souls to an immortality of blessedness, how anxiously will the Christian parent endeavour, from the earliest years, to impress upon his child the importance, of adhering rigidly to truth in the most minute circumstances! He will teach him, by precept, the burning infamy of a lie in the sight of man, and its heinous guilt in the estimation of his Creator; guilt so great, as not only to invite in this world God's indignation upon his head, but to ensure his perdition in the world to come; for "all liars," it is written, "shall have their part in the

lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." And he will teach him by his example. He will never break a promise to a child, whether for reward or punishment; never deceive him, even in the veriest trifle; never indulge in a love of the marvellous, in narrative or story, for the child's amusement of the passing hour. If he himself has drank deeply of the waters of salvation, his taste as well as his experience will suggest to him, that, even to the very young child, the most interesting tales are, at the same time, the most true. Let him, who doubts this, mark the breathless and intense interest, with which a child hangs upon every word that issues from a parent's lips, when he is detailing to his little ones such stories as the trials and faith of Joseph, the deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions, the awful punishment inflicted on Ananias and Sapphira for "lying unto God," and the like.

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XLIV.
Rev. xxi. 8.

One thing the Christian parent will not forget,—that, as far as lying is concerned, undue severity in correction will very frequently defeat its own end, and confirm the habit it is intended to eradicate. Many a child is frightened into a lie, from the fear of punishment: and a nervous and timid temperament may be so bewildered by questioning, and by the imputation of falsehood, as, in its confusion, to plead guilty to a fault which it never has committed. Happy is that parent, who can impress upon his children, in early years, some such determination as that of the excellent Bishop Beveridge; "I am resolved, by the blessing of God, always to tune my tongue in 'unison' to my heart, so as never to speak any thing but what I think really to be true. So that, if I ever speak what is not true, it shall not be the error of my will, but of my understanding." Then may he reasonably hope that, when the mind is matured and the habits fixed, the one may be so disciplined by that Spirit which it has so long both coveted and courted, and the other so moulded after that heavenly pattern which Christ has given us in Himself, that he may truly have to say with David, "I hate and abhor lying; but thy law do I love."

Beveridge's
Private
Thoughts,
"Concern-
ing My
Words,"
Resol. iii.

Ps. cxix.
163.

The Christian's tongue must not only be kept pure from evil speaking and lying, but from slander also;—for, "whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off," saith the

Ps. ci. 5.

LECTURE XLIV. Scripture: a sentence which is confirmed by the Apostle's declaration, that "revilers" are amongst those, who "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Here, as in lying, the motive is twofold; one arising from a pure love of mischief, the other from an inconsiderate love of talking. There are some characters in the world of such a malevolent description, as to take a cordial delight in backbiting their neighbours, wherever they can do it with impunity. They will forge without scruple, where they think that the lie is safe from detection; and they will exaggerate, where they cannot or dare not forge. Persons of this kind (alas that there should be such even amongst mere nominal Christians!) have commonly lost or damaged their own reputation, and are anxious to reduce as many as they can to their own degraded level: they will not, then, be over-scrupulous about the means. It is a fiendish joy, this revelling in detraction, which they share in common with their master Satan, who could not bear to see our first parents looking heavenward, when the glorious prospect was shut out for ever from his own eyes. Others, not quite so malevolent either in mind or in purpose, are yet restless and envious, in listening to the commendation of any one except themselves. With them there is a love of depreciating the good qualities of their neighbour, of dwelling upon or magnifying the bad points in his character. Are they compelled to join in his praise? There is always with it a word of qualification, an assigning of selfish or double-minded motives, even to the most honourable and straightforward actions. There is the inuendo, which dares *say* nothing, but will hint the worst: and thus it is, that the most worthless will sometimes succeed, in bringing honest virtue into disrepute. However strong may be the profession of Christianity,—or even the outward formal practice of religion,—to say nothing of the sins of envy and malice, which are incompatible with a state of grace, we must not forget the Apostle's words, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

James i. 26.

There is a very simple rule, which, as it will guide the Christian in his estimate of character, so it will influence him in the judgment that he pronounces upon others. It is this: to believe all the good he hears of his neighbour,—knowing,

that the world is not so very goodnatured as to impute to any, LECTURE XLIV. more than they deserve on this score; and to believe none of the alleged evil, until it be proven or confessed,—remembering that it is written, “judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” John vii. 24. Matt. vii. 1.

Besides this love of detraction, which proceeds from a mixture of malevolence and envy, there are other kinds of slander which,—without any positive wish or intention of doing evil,—are just as pregnant with mischievous effects. Who can foresee the consequence of indulging in that spirit of satirical exaggeration, which will hold up to ridicule the faults, either real or supposed, of others? which, for the diversion of the unthinking,—for the love of the reputation of being witty and amusing,—will be heedless of truth, and will sport freely with the fair fame of others? It is vain to plead, that no harm is meant, that all is said in jest,—with no idea of deception or of injury. It may be so with the original inventor of the tale;—but who can say, that its next retailer will not put a very different colour upon the matter, and found a heavy accusation on a false or a sorry jest? “as a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?” Surely, if for “every *idle* word that men shall speak they shall give account in the day of judgment,” how much more heavy Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. will the reckoning be, when it shall be proved against us, that the effect of our thoughtless words has been to inflict a wound on our neighbour’s character; a wound, it may be, that no penitence of ours can heal,—for which no pecuniary recompence can adequately atone! In the primitive Church, they seem to have been peculiarly alive to the value of character, and both civil and ecclesiastical law stepped in, for the protection of the slandered. Death was, by one decree, the penalty of the law against the propagator of slander, and excommunication the sentence of the Church. Earnest too, on the same score, were the exhortations of those fathers in Christ, who governed the Church by their talent, whilst they adorned it with their piety. Matt. xii. 36.

See Bingham, b. xvi. c. 13. s. 2. Chrys. Hom. xvi. in. 1 Cor. vi. 10—14. in Ephes. jux. fin.

But a higher motive than a dread of the law, or the censure of the Church, will make the real child of God a man of truth in all things. “Lord,” he will ask with David, “who shall

LECTURE XLIV. abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?"

The answer of the prophet-king will be his guide: "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." He will know, withal, that the lying, the perjured, the slanderous lips, offend against that very bond of peace, which "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;—which beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." The rejection of this principle of Christian love ensures us, as we have seen from more passages of Scripture than one, our eternal portion with him, "who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning." A steady adherence to it, as the rule of our religious and social conduct, will not only shed over ourselves "that peace which the world cannot give," from the consciousness of being indeed in covenant with God, and at one with man;—but it will afford us this twofold hope;—that, if we love the truth because we love our God, we may, with more consistency, come boldly unto the throne of grace, in prayer that the Spirit of truth may dwell within us,—and that, if we, in all the walks of life, exercise tenderness in word and deed towards our brethren, we may, with more confidence, present ourselves before the "Father of mercies and the God of all comfort," to entreat the blessings of mercy for ourselves.

Ps. xv.
1—3.

1 Cor. xiii.
6, 7.

John viii.
44.

LECTURE XLV.

Commandment X.

EXODUS XX. 17.

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.”

It was evidently not without its reference to the peculiar LECTURE
XLV. situation, and probable temptations of the Jews, both before, and at the period of the delivery of the decalogue, that it was wound up by this tenth commandment.

For generations they had been bondsmen to taskmasters, who, godless themselves, would have had no inducement to check that besetting sin of man, which will more forcibly break out when connected with arbitrary power, namely,—selfishness. They had been accustomed to see in the case of others, and to experience in their own persons, the rights of property disregarded,—the feelings set at nought,—tyranny and caprice, suffered to work their will,—the lust,—the passion,—the desire,—all indulged, unchecked. It was a fearful example to Israel; and one, which the infirmity of human nature might tempt them to copy, when once they had the upper hand, and were in conscious possession of the power, to inflict on others the miseries they had themselves undergone in the land of their captivity. They had been poor,—they were about to become rich and powerful: from slaves, they were to be conquerors:—strangers and pilgrims in a foreign country, they were going, under God’s guidance, to take possession of a land flowing with milk and honey, their prophesied and promised inheritance. Amalek was to fall before them,—Moab to be discomfited,—the Canaanites to

LECTURE XLV. bow beneath the victorious sway of Israel:—cities, walled up to heaven, to fall down before them: houses, lands, possessions, slaves male and female, cattle, to become theirs. Few things are more dangerous to the human mind than these sudden reverses from evil to good, from the bitterest slavery to liberty and conquest: and it needed some heart-searching command, to keep the mind on its proper level, and to prevent it from running riot in all the indulgence of new-found liberty,—that they might not be puffed up with their extraordinary change of position, and so become covetous, cruel, and selfish, dissatisfied with the portion allotted them, unmindful of the rights and privileges of others.

There was an obvious danger, then, lest the first settlers in Canaan should feel themselves aggrieved, in the disposition of the spoils of conquest. One, perhaps, might prefer to his own, the house or land which had been assigned to his neighbour. He might think it better situated,—more fertile,—better watered,—and so, covet it. Another might wish to take advantage of the facility given to divorce, and strive to tempt his neighbour's wife, to forego her duty in favour of his desires. A third might look upon his neighbour's male or female slave as better adapted to labour, and therefore as more valuable than his own. A fourth might wish to possess his neighbour's ox, as more useful in husbandry,—or his ass, as a better beast for the saddle than had fallen to his share. These were amongst the temptations to covetousness, that would assail the Jew, in the first years of entering into possession of a conquered land: and, that the caution might not be bounded by any change of time or place or circumstance, it was added, "thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbour's."

The sum of the injunction, then, as given to the children of Israel was, that they should be contented with their appointed lot,—should enjoy what God had given them, without a murmur, or a wish to change. And it would seem, that the prohibition from war and conquest, which was a part of the Mosaic polity, was not only founded upon the desire to preserve them, uncontaminated by contact with their idolatrous neighbours, but was closely connected with this commandment.

Singularly adapted, as was the detail of each portion of the decalogue, to the peculiar circumstances of the Hebrew people,

its comprehensive spirit is as applicable to the Christian, as it was to them. He too will feel, that there are sins of every day commission forbidden him by this, its final clause. LECTURE XLV.

The most common form in which a violation of this commandment shews itself, is in covetousness,—a sin which has been visited in Holy Writ with almost stronger expressions of abhorrence on the part of God, than any other transgression of our social and relative duties; and many are the warnings, both by example and by precept, given against its indulgence. Well may the Scriptures say, the love of money is the root of all evil!—It was for this that Balaam stifled his conviction, defied the counsels of God, and sought to mar His purposes towards His chosen people, by tempting them to sin: it was for this that Achan troubled Israel, and sinned against the Lord: for this, that the leprosy of Naaman clave unto Elisha's lying and disobedient servant. This was the sin, that tempted Ananias to lie unto the Holy Spirit of God. His proud heart was eager to seek applause from men for his supposed generosity; and his covetous heart was loth to allow him to be entirely a loser. It was this that blinded the self-righteous Pharisee to his inconsistency and sin, in adhering to the letter whilst he forgot the spirit of the law: it was his covetousness that drew down the severe rebuke of Jesus, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" And let us not forget, that the only instance recorded in the New Testament of a despairing suicide was, that of the wretched man who, through covetousness, plundered the common purse of Jesus and his brethren; and then, when he thought that his ill-gotten gains were about to cease, betrayed and sold his Master for the sorry price of a common slave. It was for this that Judas was content to exchange the salvation of his soul. Nor is precept less powerful in its warning, than example. "God," said the prophet-king of Israel, "abhorreth the covetous:" and his prayer for himself was, "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness." "For the iniquity of his covetousness," said God of His people Israel, by the mouth of His prophet, "I was wroth, and smote him:

Num. xxii.

Josh. vii.
20—25.2 Kings v.
20—27.Acts v.
1—10.Matt. xxiii.
25. 33.

Ps. x. 3.

Ps. cxix. 36.

LECTURE XLV.
 Is. lvii. 17. I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." "Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee," was the sentence of the prophet Habakkuk against national covetousness and oppression, while the greediness of the individual was denounced in an equally fearful strain: "Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!" Not less decided is the language of the New Testament. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness," said the Saviour, "for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The covetous are those who, by the Apostle's decree, are excluded from the society and communion of Christians here, and, by the express declaration of God, banished for ever from His presence hereafter. Twice in the Apostolic writings is covetousness called "idolatry," and we have no difficulty in ascertaining the reason: it is because it takes such entire possession of the soul, that the thoughts of God have literally no room to enter, still less can the love of God be the dominant principle of the heart¹. If the covetous man of this present day were to see the poor benighted heathen fall prostrate before his idol, and adore his Veshnoo, his Juggernaut, or his Brahma, he would doubtless pity his delusion, pride himself on his superior knowledge, and thank his God, that he is not as the poor idolater before him. Alas! we know not of what spirit we are; and may be pointing out the mote that is in our brother's eye, whilst we are ignorant of the very existence of the beam that deforms our own! The poor heathen acts only as he is taught, in bowing before the idol that he believes to be, and calls, his God; he is only carrying into practice those precepts which he receives as truth, in there reposing his confidence, there directing his prayer. But it is not so with the covetous, so called Christian. He acts in defiance of lessons which he professes to believe as true, and which he knows to be from God:—he is anxious to add gold to gold, and to heap possession

¹ Perhaps the most powerful human arguments against the sin of covetousness are to be found in the writings of St. Chrysostom, who waged uncompromising war with the evil spirit of his age. Hom. xi. in Rom. Hom. xviii. in Ephes. Hom. ix. 9. in 1 Cor. &c.

upon possession, although the Scriptures are full to over-
 flowing of the spiritual danger of his conduct; for we cannot LECTURE
XLV.
 but suppose Isaiah was in earnest, and spoke the full mind of
 God, when he thus warned the Jews of his own day, "Woe
 unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till
 there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst
 of the earth!" It is his pride, to be looked up to as a man of Isai. v. 8.
 wealth and consideration, and to feel that his money gives
 him a commanding influence in the circle in which he moves;
 forgetting the while that it is written, "Woe unto you that
 are rich! for ye have received your consolation." His money Luke vi. 24.
 is the chief source of his happiness,—the pivot upon which
 his actions turn,—the centre to which his affections point;
 and yet it is written, "Love not the world, neither the things
 that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of
 the Father is not in him." It is to his money that he trusts, 1 John ii.
15.
 to work out his schemes; in that he entrenches himself as in
 a sure fortress; to that he looks, as to a certain means of ad-
 vancement in the world. How can this man be said, to "trust
 in the Lord for ever?" How can he from his very heart
 believe, that "in the Lord Jehovah," and in Him alone, "is
 everlasting strength?" The actions, the habits, the daily prac- Isai. xxvi. 4.
 tice, these are the genuine evidences of the state of mind
 within;—and, if these are to be taken as a test of his real belief
 in that Book, which he professes to adopt as his guide and to
 receive as God's revealed word, it is a mockery for him, to act
 upon just so much of that word as is silent upon his darling
 passion, and to forget, or evade, so much as is inconvenient
 to remember, and to explain away such passages as these;
 "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not
 high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living 1 Tim. vi.
17.
 God." And again, "how hardly shall they that have riches
 enter into the kingdom of God!" But it is not only God who Mark x. 23.
 is forgotten and dishonoured by the covetous man. The ties,
 which bind him to his fellow-creatures, are disregarded too;
 although even in these he is not left to the guidance of human
 judgment, which, he might justly argue, may or may not be
 correct,—but he is so bound down by the express declarations
 of the Bible, as to have left to him not a loophole of escape.

The natural effect of covetousness is, to harden the heart to

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the distresses of others, and to render it ingenious to satisfy itself, that the denunciations in Holy Writ against the misuse of riches, and the very danger of their possession, do not apply to these times,—but grew out of the peculiar circumstances of the Apostolic days. Nay, so great is the power of self-deception with regard to this sin, that we not unfrequently find the covetous man, either believing himself a pattern of liberality, or labouring under a sort of monomaniacal delusion, that he is too poor to give. In either case it seems, that a certain sort of judicial blindness is spread around the soul, disguising from it its real position here, and its sure requital hereafter.

Ill does he act up to the Gospel rule of love, who so lightly regards his Saviour's counsel, as to make his charities depend upon what little overplus may remain to him, after having indulged himself to the full in every luxury within his reach;—who can surround himself with every earthly comfort, that human caprice can desire or unbounded wealth afford, and yet be selfishly indifferent whether others have even the common necessities of life. He cannot in the disposal of his income recollect, that we are at best but the stewards of God's property, His agents, His almoners; and that, as it is required of stewards that they be found faithful, so the Christian will use God's property, as if his Master's eye were upon him. Dead, utterly dead to the higher calls of spirituality must that heart be, which can listen unmoved to the cries and tears of poverty, when it has the power to relieve them; which can close itself against the various claims of benevolence, that are perpetually arising about and around it; which can pass by unheeded the means and opportunities of doing good that are put before it; which can hoard for the mere love of hoarding,—thus imitating the example of the unprofitable servant, who was punished, not for the misuse of his talent, but for making no use of it at all,—for acting the miser with it; which can not only count the cost, when it is counselled to be liberal to man, but will grudge, and even refuse to give of its superfluities, when the call is made for God's sake,—for the extension of His spiritual kingdom, for the diffusion of His saving knowledge! Awful indeed is the delusion, when a heart like this can deem itself religious, fulfilling its duties towards God and man,—because the outward forms of Christianity are

complied with,—the Church attended, the Bible read, the Sabbath revered, the sacraments regarded,—and because it is undefiled by any of those grosser sins which disgrace humanity, or are repugnant to the feelings of society; and because it thinks it can safely say, that it abides by the Apostolic counsel, and keeps itself “unspotted from the world.” LECTURE XLV.
James i. 27.

The former part of the self-same text of Scripture would suffice, one would think, to destroy this hope, even were there no other passages of a kindred character: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this,—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.” Let not the Christian suppose, that, if during his earthly trial he has been unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon, the true riches will hereafter be committed to him, when his trial shall have ended, and himself be judged according to his works. We must expunge no small part of the Bible before we can be justified in believing, that there can be salvation for the covetous man, who, warned of his sin, either shuts his eyes against its reality, or persists in its indulgence;—who thinks that his other good qualities will outweigh this one defect;—or that God will not really carry His sentence into effect. We must get rid of St. Matthew’s twenty-fifth chapter before we can refuse to believe, that charity to the brethren of Christ, for Christ’s sake, will form hereafter a most important feature in,—nay, become the very groundwork of,—our final acceptance or rejection. Luke xvi. 11.
Rev. xx. 12.
See also xxii. 12.
Matt. xxv. 35—46.

It may be urged, that Christian liberality is often checked by Christian duty; that there are ties and obligations of such an engrossing character, drawing so largely upon our resources, that we really cannot afford to be as liberal as we otherwise would be. Of course the warmest advocate of Christian liberality would not mean to say, that we are to defraud our creditors, or neglect the welfare of our families, in order to give to others. “He is worse than an infidel,” says St. Paul, “who provides not for his own.” But we may safely assert, that with all these ties, where there is a Christian-like desire to exercise liberality, the power, more or less, will not commonly be wanting: there are few cases in which a little self-denial will not give this power at once. Something can be, in most instances, abridged from our needless expenditure,—something from our daily luxuries or extrava-

1 Tim. v. 8.

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gances;—nay, the end may often be effected by the renunciation of a single expensive indulgence, by the giving up of some one source of outlay, into which we have entered more for appearance than for comfort's sake,—more because we think it consonant with our means or station, than that it is really in accordance with our wishes, or our feelings. It is here that the liberal for Christ's sake will be ingenious in finding excuses to save, that he may have to give,—whilst the covetous is as dexterous in devising apologies to stint, that he may hoard. It is not unfrequently too, that a scruple of conscience is pleaded as an excuse, for withholding that which we can well afford for any public or religious object:—one does not like one measure, his neighbour objects to another,—his conscience disapproves of it. There is nothing so economical as a conscience of this description,—for we rarely find it overruled by a powerful scruple on the score of giving: it is always tender and backward on the saving side. When a tale of urgent distress is brought before it, when the claims of the ignorant, who lack the means of knowledge, are urged upon it,—when extension of churches, schools, and hospitals at home, or our duty of doing our all to spread the knowledge of a crucified Saviour amongst our brethren in the colonies, or to light the lamp of the Gospel amongst the heathen,—when all these points of Christian liberality are pressed home upon such a conscience, as a matter of high privilege rather than of duty, it is more apt to cry out in the spirit of Cain, “Am I my brother's keeper?” than to realize to itself the beautiful testimony of the patriarch Job, “When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out.”

Gen. iv. 9.

Job xxix.
11—16.

Why is it, then, that the individual disciple of Christ, who, if he is as his Master, must be self-denying, and not anxious to be troubled about the things of this world,—why

is it that he is ever desirous to acquire money, when experience tells us of the danger of its misuse,—and the Scriptures are full of warning against its very possession, whilst they speak of comparative poverty as more conducive to the spiritual welfare of the soul? “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” is the remark of our Saviour: whilst St. James asks, “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?” Why are these declarations? for it would seem there is no sin in a rich inheritance, nor any especial merit in being born poor. The common answer is, that our Saviour’s words were meant to apply, only to those who *trust* in riches; and the parallel passage in St. Mark is adduced, as a proof of this interpretation. But are we to forget the constant connexion between having money, and trusting in it as removing a great part of our every day anxieties respecting our worldly well-being? It is of the ordinary effect of riches on the one hand, and of poverty in the Christian on the other, that Christ and His Apostle spake. Christ evidently wished to impress upon us, that the absence of care in the rich man as to his daily provision, the ease with which he can entrench himself around with every earthly comfort, the means afforded him of accomplishing every passing wish that money can satisfy, the luxurious mode of living which, in a highly refined state of society, is thought not becoming only, but even necessary to the rich man; these,—the natural effects of wealth,—are amongst the perils of which our Saviour speaks. Let the Christian cultivate what communion with his God he may,—let him abstain from misusing the unrighteous mammon,—let him avoid making the acquisition of money in itself an end,—it cannot be that his wealth is without its perils: there is the peril of his attaching too much importance to his money,—the peril of making life so full of comforts, that he is loth to leave it, and unable to realize the Apostle’s assertion, “to me to die is gain,”—the peril of placing the unsearchable riches of Christ in a secondary point of view,—the peril of being drawn away from that *entire* dependence upon God, which the poor man, whom He hath removed from all these temptations, is, if he be at all a Christian, absolutely compelled as

LECTURE
XLV.Luke xviii.
24.

James ii. 5.

Mark x. 24.

Phil. i. 21.

LECTURE XLV. well as privileged to feel. Well then might the wise preacher of Israel say, in his old age, of the indulgences and pursuits which the possession of riches will both suggest and exercise, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit!" Well might his own experience wring from him the confession, that they had tempted him to give "his heart to know madness and folly as well as wisdom," and compel him to utter with heavy self-reproach, "there is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." Well too might the Apostle Paul warn his own son in the faith, "they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows!" Well too might the fathers of the primitive Church be so earnest, in their expostulations and warnings against the evil tendency of wealth, and the debasing sin of covetousness!

Ps. x. 14. 18.
Ecc. ii. 1—17.

Ib. i. 17.

Ib. v. 13.

1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.
Cyp. Tr. vi. 22.
Chrysos. Hom. in 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10.
xxiii. 8.
Clem. ad Cor. xxxv.
Fragm. iv. v. vi.
Polycarp ad Phil. ii. and iv. Basil. Hom. ad divites. Ib. Hom. in Lacizis, s. 5.

Well too might the fathers of the primitive Church be so earnest, in their expostulations and warnings against the evil tendency of wealth, and the debasing sin of covetousness!

Closely allied to covetousness is envy; that narrow feeling which sickens at the praises or success of others, and becomes, in consequence, the main-spring of many an inordinate and selfish desire, tending to our neighbour's injury or dishonour. It has been wisely ordained by Providence, that most sins should carry their sting as an abiding curse about them; that if the sinner himself be not brought to the practice of his Christian duty, by the sense of his own ever-present misery, others, at least, might take warning from his example, and be deterred from the like, by the manifest fulfilment of God's word in His punishment of sin. One of these is envy,—the more a source of disquiet, because the envious man, for very shame's sake, endeavours to keep his feelings to himself, and to let his own heart be alone conscious of its bitterness. But in vain:—the pent-up tempest will find vent; the spirit of envy will break out in the sneer of detraction against the fairest character; it will strive to decry the most generous; to impute a corrupt motive to the most disinterested. Nay, it will trick itself out with the affectation of exceeding candour, and say, it cannot bear that the unworthy should receive commendations to which they are not justly entitled: and so the envious man, reluctant that any but himself should stand

well in the eyes of the world, will make it his business to discover and dwell upon every failing in his neighbour's character, whilst he studiously avoids bringing forward a single point in his favour. The least observant eye can detect the gnawing worm within: and, whilst the inspired Hebrew pronounced envy to be "the rottenness of the bones," the heathen moralist needed but the light of nature to shew him its infamy in a social, and its misery in a personal point of view. It is so directly opposed to the possibility of entertaining any love towards our neighbour, or any gratitude towards God, that we cannot wonder at finding envy classed by the Apostle Paul, side by side with the worst of crimes, and included in that catalogue of the works of the flesh, which shut out their possessor from all share in the inheritance purchased for him by Christ. It was through this evil disposition that the first murder in the world was wrought: through this, that Jacob's children forgot the ties of nature and of blood, and sold their brother Joseph as a slave. It was for this, that Miriam was smitten with leprosy,—because she could not brook, that Moses alone should have the ascendancy. This was the feeling that drew down God's indignation upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were envious at what they thought was an usurpation on the part of Moses and of Aaron. Envy too, as the sacred historian tells us, was at the bottom of that host of ungodly passions, which made the Scribes and Pharisees so far abandon the old national feeling of the Jew, as first to deliver up one of their own brethren to their pagan oppressors, and next to demand, at their hands, His punishment and death. We might multiply instances; but these are sufficient to shew the carnal nature of the passion of envy,—its hostility to every ordinance or dispensation of God,—its incompatibility with the peace or well-being of society. Amply is St. James's remark borne out by scriptural facts, as well as by daily experience,—“where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work:” and again, “the spirit that dwelleth in us,” (the evil spirit that is,) “lusteth to envy.”

LECTURE
XLV.Prov. xiv.
30.Arist. Rhet.
ii. 10.
Eth. ii. 7.Rom. i. 29.
See also
Chrysos. in
1 Cor. Hom.
xxx. 7.Gen. iv. 3
—8.
Clem. Ep.
ad Cor. 4.
Gen. xxxvii.
11. Acts
vii. 9.
Num. xii.
1—10.Num. xvi. 3.
See Stillington,
Serm.
vii. on
Jude 11.Matt. xxvii.
18.James iii. 16.
Ib. iv. 5.
See also
1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

Another very common violation of this commandment remains to be considered; and that is discontent. The very existence of this spirit argues a distrust in God's overruling Providence; implies, that we think we know better than our

LECTURE XLV. Maker, what is good for us ; involves a practical denial of one of the most consoling truths of the Gospel,—that “all things work together for good to them that love God.” If we believe, from our very hearts, that the Scripture is in earnest in telling us, that God has so manifested His love towards us, as to “send His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him;”—if we know, that He has in so many passages of Holy Writ spoken of Himself as our Father, and of us as His beloved,—His redeemed children ;—then all argument upon the wisdom and the mercy of the several stations, trials, sorrows, and perplexities allotted to us, is closed at once. A Father, who has so proved Himself to be a God of love, in the most important matters connected with our immortal life, cannot be supposed to pass by quite unheeded the events of this mortal pilgrimage, avowedly, as it is, a state of trial and preparation for eternity. Nor, as He is omnipotent, can He suffer them to be otherwise than such as are best adapted to secure that sanctification, which He has declared to be His will,—nay, such as we ourselves would welcome, could we look into the womb of time, and see what is in store for us. If then the professed servant of Christ be ever tempted to be impatient under the ills of life, and to murmur, because things do not go quite so smoothly with him as he could wish, let him sit in judgment on himself, and see whether a want of faith is not at the bottom of his discomfort. It cannot be thus with the truly born of God, the baptized of the Spirit! Holier feelings will come across him as he encounters each new dispensation : and, when the first bitterness of the trial shall have passed away, its experience will furnish him with clearer views of God's methods of dealing with His creatures,—stronger inducements to depend upon Him for deliverance. The past will be to him the index of the future : and, though it may not be always given to him, to see distinctly the reason of the trial, or the peculiar mode which God has compassed for his deliverance, he will look upon the stormy sea of life with the self-same spirit of faith, with which the prophet-leader of the trembling hosts of Israel surveyed, at Pi-hahiroth, the waters in the front, the foeman in the rear. With him he will say, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will shew you this day : the

Rom. viii.
28.

1 John iv.
9. and iii. 16.

1 Thess.
iv. 3.

Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." This is the spirit, in which the Christian must and will go forth into the world, to combat with its prince. And if poor human nature, overtaken and overtempted as it may fear, should sometimes well-nigh sink beneath its trials, it can be strengthened anew with the remembrance, that it is written, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee ; because he trusteth in Thee." Thus the common events or circumstances of life, many of which the mere worldly spirit would regard with secret discontent or open murmurs, are looked upon by him as results of that divine economy, every portion of which must have its meaning and its mercy. Is his station humble? "It may be," he will reason with himself, "it may be that, in the knowledge of God, a higher sphere might have been a snare to me ; I might have been unequal to its duties, weighed down by its responsibilities, distracted by its cares from choosing that 'better part,' which, when given me by God, the world can never take away." Is he poor? To say nothing of the perils ascribed by Scripture to the possession of wealth, his own experience will point to many an instance, in which it has not only not proved a real blessing, but a substantial curse. He will see how often it is attended by covetousness, by luxury, by self-indulgence, by that love of the world which cannot be of God, by too great regard for the gift, and by utter forgetfulness of the Giver : and so "the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." Is he bowed down by disease? He has long learned, that sickness is one of those wholesome medicines which God sends to discipline the body, that they may purge the soul. He will receive his visitation as a token, that there is something yet unaccomplished in him, which God would fain have done ; he will know, that some of the holiest lessons that are learnt by man are forced, as it were, upon him, when he lies upon a bed of sickness ; and that many a soul, now in glory, has then first been taught the saving truths of the Gospel, and to cry out at the awful discovery, even as the Apostle when he felt himself sinking in the sea of Galilee, "Lord, save me, I perish." Then first has it been led to see its own sinfulness, its lost condition, its capability of renewal through grace, the price paid for its redemption, and the willingness of God, that

LECTURE
XLV.
Exod. xiv.
13, 14.

Is. xxvi. 3.
Phil. iv. 7.

Is. xxix. 19.

See John
xv. 2.

Matt. xiv.
30. viii. 25.

LECTURE “none should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

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2 Pet. iii. 9. It is no small mercy, he will feel, that the soul should thus be taken out of the world, whilst yet in the world,—to have a time especially given it for self-communing and prayer, wherein it may work out its salvation “with fear and trembling.”

Phil. ii. 12. Is he in the deep waters of affliction? He will feel that, however pleasant it may be to the natural man to sail joyously down the unruffled stream of life, the tempest and the struggle are oftentimes better for the soul: the spiritualized mind will welcome them as God’s means, whereby it is warned of the hindrance that uninterrupted prosperity will offer, to the growth and expansion of divine feelings within it. He will remember, that the sorrows of the godless Manasseh wrung from him that prayer, which the pleadings of the Most High had failed to do. “When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.” And he will not forget, that the experience of David, that well-trying man of God, led him more than once to confess, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.”

2 Chron. xxxiii. 12.
Ps. cxix. 71. 67. 75.

Are those, whom he loved so passing dear, torn one by one from his side, and he left alone, to say with Job in his bereavement, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither?” He will not forget to add with him, “the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Job i. 21.

It is thus, by carrying into practice the great principles of the Gospel through all the changes and chances of life, that

1 Tim. vi. 6. “godliness with contentment” is felt to be “great gain;” thus, that it is known, not believed only, to be “profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;” thus, that the true child of God can keep his soul in patience, and wait in faith for the Lord’s own time of rescue,—replying to the scorner, in the words of the patriarch of Uz, “What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” whilst the ungodly can but follow the counsel of the same holy man’s misbelieving wife, “Curse God, and die.”

Job ii. 10.
Ib. 9.

But example is at all times more powerful than precept; and we shall find, in the character of the Apostle Paul, a most

striking proof of the blessed frame of mind, that invariably LECTURE XLV. accompanies a contented spirit. It was not only that he exhorted others, to be "content with such things as they had,"—and told them, that "godliness with contentment is Heb. xiii. 5. great gain :"—his own conduct was a living exemplification of 1 Tim. vi. 6. his precepts. He had given up every thing that, in a human point of view, was either covetable or loveable,—station, friends, fortune, independence, country,—all, for the simple privilege of preaching Christ Jesus to the world. Does an expression of regret ever escape him, for these his many sacrifices for his Saviour's sake? Is there any hint in his writings, that he is at all discontented at having resigned so much for the cause of the Gospel, or at all doubtful as to the acceptance, on the part of God, of this free-will offering of himself, to labour diligently for the brethren of Christ? Let his own 2 Cor. xii. 15. words speak for him: "What things were gain to me," he says to the Philippians, "those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless," he continues, "and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." And again, in the same Phil. iii. 7, 8. Epistle, in speaking of his narrow means he says, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Phil. iv. 11. He knew his reward for thus loving God, rather than the world. "Henceforth," are his words to Timothy, "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." And even on 2 Tim. iv. 8. that point, in respect of which he might have been supposed to have been most sensitive,—the peculiar privilege of his ministerial office,—even there the Apostle was invulnerable. When others took advantage of his imprisonment, to usurp his functions and preach the Gospel,—not from the single-minded view of turning sinners from the error of their ways, but supposing thereby "to add affliction to his bonds ;"—so far from reviling them,—so far from complaining, that his own person was thereby held in little esteem, and his own counsels set partially aside for those of newer teachers,—"what then?" he exclaimed, "notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

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How different is this spirit from that of the worldly and discontented! Place men in the very situation that they would choose for themselves,—let their steps be planted in the very path that they would mark out for their own career,—there would still, after a little while, be some alloy, some drawback. As it was with Adam, so it would be with them. The one thing withheld, the one thing wanting,—although in the midst of plenty,—would be the little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump. Let but one thing turn out amiss, and there would be more discontent at this single eye-sore, than thankfulness for myriads of every-day blessings,—not valued as they should be, because of their uninterrupted succession. Whether, then, with reference to his own happiness or his Christian duty, the true disciple will strive to cultivate that frame of mind, so touchingly described by a venerable father of our Church, on whom the mantle of an Apostle seems almost to have descended, and who suffered, first, suspension, and next, deposition from his high office, rather than do violence to his conscience. “Lord,” was the prayer of good old Bishop Ken, “make me contented, and thankful, and well pleased with that portion thy providential love has allotted me, and to acquiesce in thy choice as best for me.” With him, too, he will feel that there is, after all, an ambition that he may well exercise, a covetousness that he may entertain, a discontent that he may experience. “Forgive me, O my God,” are the words of the same writer, “if I am unmeasurably ambitious, it is only of thy favour;—forgive me, if I am unsatiably covetous, it is only of thy fruition;—forgive me, if I am perpetually discontented, it is only because I cannot love thee more.”

Ken's
Expos.
p. 79.
new ed.

Ib. 80.

The great lesson, then, that the Christian learns from these last commandments is, the obligation to love his neighbour as himself, and to do to all men as he would they should do unto him. It is not meant by this, that we should shew the same measure of love to the stranger as to the friend, to the ungodly as to the righteous,—but that, whenever an opportunity of doing good is put before us, we should strive to act towards others with the same kindness, the same sympathy, the same liberality, as we should wish them to exercise towards ourselves, if circumstances were

changed,—if we were in their position, and they in ours. Let Christian principle act upon this “golden rule,” as far as is practicable;—human selfishness will always be at hand, to prevent our stretching it too far². LECTURE XLV.

The details of this general duty are put before us in the several commandments of the second table. In obedience to the fifth, the Christian will love, honour, and succour his father and mother; knowing, that one of the first duties of the children of God is, to “obey their parents in the Lord;” Eph. vi. 1. “to shew piety at home, and to requite them” for the tenderness they have in earlier years bestowed upon their offspring. 1 Tim. v. 4. By this commandment, he will learn to honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him; submitting himself, according to St. Peter’s counsel, “to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.” So too he will heed the voice of his spiritual teachers and pastors, as standing to him in God’s stead; and as such, he will “esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” His masters he will “count worthy of all honour, that the name of God be not blasphemed.” He will order himself lowly and reverently to all his betters; rendering “to all their dues; fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.” 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.
Rom. xiii. 1—7.
Prov. viii. 15, 16.
1 Thess. v. 13.
Heb. xiii. 17.
1 Tim. vi. 1.
Rom. xiii. 7.
1 Pet. v. 5.
Lev. xix. 32.

In the sixth commandment, he will see his duty to hurt nobody by word or deed, but to endeavour to act upon his Saviour’s counsel, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.” And he will bear no malice nor hatred in his heart, endeavouring not to be a child “in understanding,” but “in malice” a child: knowing, withal, that if he hateth “his brother whom he hath Matt. v. 44.
Rom. xiii. 10.
1 Cor. xiv. 20.

² In the year A.D. 222, when the gentle influence of Christianity had begun to soften the rudeness, and to qualify the selfishness of the Pagan world,—Alexander, at that time Emperor of Rome, who copied many Christian customs, used “to quote them for a saying which he was very fond of, and which he ordered to be inscribed upon many public buildings; ‘Do not to another, what you wish him not to do to you.’” Burton’s Lectures on Eccl. Hist. l. xxiii. vol. ii. p. 277.

LECTURE seen ;" it is a mockery to say, that he loveth " God whom he
 XLV. hath not seen."

1 John iv.
20.

In the seventh commandment, he will recognize that law of purity which enjoins him, as he loves his soul, to keep his body in temperance, soberness, and chastity ; for " the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord ; and the Lord for the body : " and he will remember, that, according to the Apostle

1 Cor. vi. 13.

Paul's declaration, " every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things ; " thus establishing the point, that a body in subjection is an unfailing test of Christian earnestness and sincerity. By the eighth commandment, he will understand, that he is bidden to be true and just in all his dealings : for all trickery, all cheating,—the false balance, the

Prov. xx. 10 ;
xi. 1 ; xvi.
11.

false measure, are pronounced in Scripture to be " alike abomination to the Lord." By this, too, he is enjoined to keep his hands from picking and stealing ; crimes inconsistent with the profession of the Christian, who has " renounced the hidden things of dishonesty."

2 Cor. iv. 2.

Titus iii. 1,
2.

The ninth charges him to keep his tongue from evil speaking,—for the Apostle enjoins us to be " ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man ; " from lying,—for it is written, that " all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth

Rev. xxi. 8.

with fire and brimstone ; " from slandering,—for God said of old time, by His servant David, " whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off."

Ps. ci. 5.

And lastly, in the tenth commandment, the corner-stone of this goodly fabric of divine architecture, he will discover a most comprehensive law ; one, which bids him not to covet or desire other men's goods,—for Christ Himself has warned us, " Take heed and beware of covetousness : for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." By this he is commanded, to learn and labour truly to get his own living,—abiding by the Apostle's counsel, " study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing ; " and profiting by an Apostle's example, whose honest boast was, that he " ate no man's bread for nought ; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that he might not be chargeable to any of them." And by this the Christian is

Luke xii.
15.

1 Thess. iv.
11, 12.
Ephes. iv.
28.

2 Thess. iii.
8.

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bidden to do his duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call him; not murmuring at the dispensations of God, as did the children of Israel who perished for their ingratitude and discontent,—but striving to say with Eli, even under the hardest lot, “It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good.” Not for one instant will he suffer himself to suppose, that he knows, better than his Maker, what station of life is best and fittest for him;—but he will place ever before his eyes the Apostle Paul’s injunction to his Corinthian converts, “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.” And so, “whatsoever his hand findeth to do, he will do it with his might.”

Num. xiv. 29.
1 Cor. x. 10.
1 Sam. iii. 18.

1 Cor. vii. 20.
Eccl. ix. 10.

True, most true it is, that, whilst he endeavours to act upon the counsel of the wise preacher of Israel, “Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man,” many will be the struggles between the flesh and the spirit; many the temptations to start aside as a broken bow; and, perhaps, many a backsliding too, as a caution against self-confidence. But onward, child of God—onward. Is it not written, “My grace is sufficient for thee?” a promise, as comprehensive as our needs are great. Onward, in the faith and fear of God,—in trust in the Saviour,—in dependence upon the Spirit. It will not be all failure,—it cannot be all discomfort:—the assurance that the expiring David held forth to his son, is the heritage of the faithful in every age,—and so it may be thine as well: “The Lord God will be with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” Thou too canst plead, and humbly claim thy Saviour’s merciful pledge, “he that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.” May God then, in His infinite compassion, grant (since such is the glorious reward for faith and obedience), that we may all have grace to say, with a sincere and trusting heart, “Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these Thy laws in our hearts, we beseech Thee.”

Eccl. xii. 13.

2 Cor. xii. 9

1 Chron. xxviii. 20.

John xiv. 21.



Part IV.

The Christian's Prayer.

Catechist. My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve Him, without His special grace; which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer: Let me hear therefore, if thou canst say the Lord's Prayer.

Answer. Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven: Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. Amen.

Q. What desirest thou of God in this prayer?

A. I desire my Lord God our heavenly Father, who is the Giver of all goodness, to send His grace unto me, and to all people; that we may worship Him, serve Him, and obey Him, as we ought to do. And I pray unto God, that He will send us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies; and that He will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our sins; and that it will please Him to save and defend us in all dangers ghostly and bodily; and that He will keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death. And this I trust He will do of His mercy and goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ: And therefore I say, Amen; So be it.

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1 COR. xiv. 15.

“I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.”

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Matt. vii.
28, 29.

At a very early period of our Saviour's ministry, He excited the astonishment of the people, by teaching them,—not as the Scribes, who established their arguments on the foundation of precedent, and theological learning, but “as one having authority;” putting forth, that is, the judgment of God, not mere human opinion, upon many most important points of doctrine, and of discipline. It was at this time that, amongst other lessons, Jesus first taught His disciples the difference between formal and spiritual prayer.

Matt. xxiii.
14.

Amongst our Saviour's hearers were many of the Scribes and Pharisees; some of whom, it would appear from His remarks here and elsewhere, were in the habit of making a parade of their presumed piety, and a shew of their earnestness in public and private prayer, as a cloak to cover the hollowness within. There was a profit in this ostentation: they gained thereby a character for holiness and justice; they procured the good will and confidence of their neighbours; and so enriched themselves through the affections of the unsuspecting.

Matt. vi. 7.

Our Saviour exposes this hypocrisy, and its motives; He condemns this standing in the most public places, this street-devotion, this easy mouth-homage. And He teaches them, withal, that they shall not be heard “for their much speaking;” that it is not the length, nor the verbiage of the prayer, that renders it acceptable in the sight of God,—but its sincerity; a precept, which, in another Gospel, is strikingly enforced by the example of the self-righteous Pharisee and the self-condemning publican.

Luke xviii.
14.

After having thus pointed out the prevailing errors of the day, and shewn his hearers how they *were not* to pray ;—He instructed them how they *ought* to pray ; and gave them a form of prayer, which, “for a succession of solemn thoughts, for fixing the attention upon a few great points, for suitability to every condition, for conciseness without obscurity, for the weight and real importance of its petitions, is without an equal or a rival.” Upon a subsequent occasion, after our Saviour had been engaged in prayer with His disciples, one of them, anxious, apparently, to gain from Him a form of prayer for his own daily use, asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” This was an allusion to a common custom amongst the Jewish doctors, who usually gave their pupils a particular form of prayer. Jesus complied with his request, by repeating the same prayer that He had previously put forth ;—knowing well, and perhaps, too, meaning to indicate, that it contained within itself the heads of all needful petitions, with regard to our own conduct towards God,—or His dealings with ourselves.

It has been remarked by learned writers, that so averse was our Lord to any needless innovations, and so tender to the religious scruples of His Jewish hearers, that He condensed into this short form the substance of many formularies, then in common use amongst them ¹, and, of course, more or less familiar to the great body of His hearers ; “thus sanctioning, by His divine approbation, the simple, venerable, and elevated devotion, which, even in a most corrupt age, and amidst a multitude of frivolous and profane traditions, was happily preserved among God’s ancient people.”

We must not forget that there is one exception, and an important one, to the truth of the remark, that the Lord’s prayer is entirely of Jewish origin. It is true, that a spirit of forbearance, and even forgiveness, is inculcated in the Jewish euchologies, but “the divine condition of forgiveness, ‘as we forgive trespasses against us,’ is, without pretence of similarity, solely and exclusively the dictate of the great Author of our redemption.” A clause this of such importance, and to Christ’s Jewish hearers of such novelty, that, upon its first

LECTURE
XLVI.Paley’s Evidences,
pt. ii. c. 2.

Luke xi. 1.

Whitby, in
loc.Lightfoot,
Hor. Heb.
in Matt. vi.
Whitby, in
loc.Comber’s
Companion
to the Tem-
ple, pt. i.
s. 5. l.
Bp. Jebb’s
Practical
Theol. vol. i.
p. 21.Elsley’s
Annot. in
loc.

¹ See the forms collected by the Rev. J. Gregory, quoted in Horne’s Introd. vol. iii. p. 3. c. 4. s. 1.

LECTURE
XLVI.August.
Serm. in
Mont. l. ii.
s. 11. al. 39.

delivery, He thought it necessary to dwell more at length upon it, and to explain it more fully, immediately upon the conclusion of the prayer. "We should not overlook," says St. Augustine, "that of all the petitions enjoined by the Lord, He judgeth that most worthy of further enforcement, which relates to forgiveness of sins, in which He would have us merciful, which is the only means of escaping misery."

It is impossible not to be struck with the extreme reverence, with which the Primitive Church regarded this prayer of Christ. It was a source of thanksgiving to the godly worshipper of those simple days, that,—as the Jewish Church possessed her forms of prayer, handed down to her members, partly by oral tradition, partly in the inspired words of the Davids and Solomons of her early days, and in each case endeared to them by the use of many a generation,—so the Christian Church had her forms as well; and standing at the head of them, a form, not only sanctioned, but even taught, and commanded to be used, by God manifest in the flesh. So far from holding, with some in these degenerate days, that the commands of Christ in this respect are to be understood as limited to the ages in which, and to the persons to whom they were immediately addressed, they believed that God's Spirit was more surely drawn down upon the true worshipper's heart by this, than by any other prayer. They were unspeakably thankful, in that our blessed Lord, "amongst His other saving instructions and divine lessons, wherewith He counsels for His people unto salvation, did Himself also give a form of praying, and Himself advise and instruct them, what they ought to pray for." They acknowledge that "He, who gave to us to live, taught us also to pray, through no other bounty than that by which He hath condescended to give and grant all things besides; to the end that speaking unto the Father in the prayer and petition which the Son hath taught, we may receive a readier hearing." Well might they ask, "more spiritual what prayer can be, than that which was given us by Christ, by whom also the Holy Spirit was sent to us? or what prayer more true, in the presence of the Father, than that which the Son, who is Truth, delivered from His own mouth?" Well might they draw the conclusion, that "it is not ignorance only, but a sin, to pray other-

Chrys. Hom.
1. de S.
Pentecost.
s. 4.
August.
Epist. 130.
ad Probam
c. 14.
Bingham,
b. xiii. c. vii.
s. 8.
Cyp. Tr.
vii. 1.

Ib.

Ib.

wise than He hath taught, since Himself has ruled and spoken, 'Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.'" Ill, then, can he lay claim to the title of a Christian, who, to indulge the liberty of his own opinion, would wantonly deprive himself of the privilege, of "offering up to God of His own, of mounting unto God's hearing with the petitioning of Christ."

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Ib.
See also
Hooker's
Eccle. Pol.
v. 35. s. 3.

Nor is this an individual testimony to the excellence of the Lord's Prayer, borne by one of the most gifted children of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, and not representing her universal judgment. By another it is called, "the Epitome of the Gospel." A third declares in one place, that in these few words Christ instructed us in all manner of virtue; and in another, that this prayer was peculiar in its use to the children of God, who alone were privileged to address Him as their Father, in virtue of their regeneration and adoption. Another speaks of this prayer as a sort of daily Baptism, because in the pious use of it we obtain daily remission of sins, as we did first in Baptism. And we have the testimony of many an ecclesiastical writer in those days to prove to us, that the Church, as a body, acted upon those sentiments of her godly children. In the primitive days, the command of Christ, "when ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven," was interpreted literally, as enjoining us always to incorporate this amongst our daily prayers. Accordingly, it formed a part of every single office of the early Church; a practice, to which we of England have well and wisely adhered, in our earnest desire to tread in the steps of the holy men of old, and to defer to the judgment of Catholic antiquity.

Tertull. de
Orat. l.

Chrys. Hom.
xix. s. 7.
in Matt.
vi. 8.
Hom. in
Ps. cxii. l.
Hom. x. s. 3.
in Coloss.
iv. 2.

August.
Serin. 119.
de Temp. al.
213. s. 8.

Tertull. de
Orat. c. l. 9.
Cyp. ut sup.
August.
Hom. xxix.
al. clxxxi.
de verb.
Apost. s. 6.
Chrys. Hom.
x. s. 3. in
Coloss.
Bingham,
b. xiii. c. vii.
s. 2.

In Baptism, the newly regenerate were enjoined, as they rose from out the water, to address the Father, who thus had incorporated them into his own family, in the words which the Son had taught them: nor were the converts, as we have seen, permitted to call God by the endearing appellation of Father, before that period; it was the honorary privilege of the faithful communicant, one never conceded to the unbaptized catechumen. At the celebration of the Eucharist, it was used after the prayer of consecration, when God had been first entreated for the common peace of the Church and tranquillity of the world, and after the congregation had

Chrys.
Hom. lxii. in
Paralyt. s. 6.
Hom. vi. in
Coloss. s. 4.
Apost.
Const.
lib. vii. c. 44.

LECTURE solemnly commemorated the good and godly who had fallen asleep before them; and thus, the non-communicant, the catechumen, or the infidel, who might have been present at the former portion of divine service, were each and all excluded from the privilege of joining in this; a practice derived, as is generally supposed, from the usage of the Apostles.

August.

Hom.

lxxxiii. al.
cxxxvii. de
diversis.

Epist. lix.

al. cxlix.

ad Paulin.

s. 16.

Cyrl.

Catec. xxiii.

Mystag. 5.

Hieron.

lib. 3. cont.

Pelag. c. 5.

Chrys.

Hom.

xxvii. in

Gen. s. 6.

Conc.

Toletan. 4.

can. 9.

Bingham,

b. xiii. c. 7.

s. 4. Apost.

Const. l. vii.

c. 24. Chrys.

in Ps. cxii.

Hom. x. in

Coloss. s. 3.

Ambros. de

Virg. lib. iii.

Bingham,

ut sup. s. 7.

Optat. lib. ii.

p. 57. ed.

Par. 1631.

It made a part of their daily morning and evening public prayers, and of their private offices of devotion: nay, even heretics themselves, though some opposed the Church and others departed from her communion, still shrunk, with instinctive dread, from the disuse of the prayer of Christ.

From these many proofs of the reverence, in which this prayer was held by the wise and godly of the primitive Church, it will be easily seen, that in those better days, whilst the remembrance of the Apostles, of their counsels, their decisions, and their usages, was more fresh in the minds of men, there was no cavilling at the use of the Lord's prayer, because it was a form; no human fancy that the adoption of this, or of any other form of prayer, was a fettering of the free spirit of devotion; no irreverent caprice, that the direct or indirect tendency of liturgies was to substitute the homage of the tongue for the worship of the heart. So far from these objections being considered as allowable, it is matter of history, not of surmise, that in those, as well as in preceding ages, a liturgical form of worship was looked upon, as best adapted to the spiritual wants of man, as well as most conducive to the honour of God, and to the decent order of His service.

But this is too interesting a matter to be dismissed thus briefly: it may not therefore be without its interest, nor irrelevant to the subject of the Lord's prayer, to examine, somewhat more at length, the nature and authority of liturgical services.

Prideaux's

Connect.

pt. i. b. 6.

s. 2, 3.

Horne's

Introd.

vol. iii. p. 3.

c. 1. s. 4.

In tracing the history of these services, we may remark that, although the antiquity of the existing Jewish liturgies has been much questioned by the learned, and although the eighteen prayers², which the Rabbies assert were composed

² See these prayers quoted by Horne (as in the margin), with an additional one, composed probably by Gamaliel or his pupil Samuel, as a form of execration against the Christians.

by Ezra, belong evidently to a later period, there is no doubt but that forms of some kind existed amongst the Jews, from the very earliest time. Their ordinary service was of two kinds; that of the temple, and that of the synagogue. In many respects, as might be supposed, they differed: but in one point at least they agreed; in each, the public prayers were offered up in a certain constant form of words. In the temple, there were appointed services at their sacrifices for every day in the week, for their Sabbaths, and for their respective festivals and holy days; services, with which our Saviour and His disciples appear to have complied, whenever their religious obligations, as Jews, bade them frequent the temple. And the Psalms, as we learn from their titles, and, in part too, from their structure, were mostly composed for the express service of the temple. In the synagogue, there were no sacrifices, but only prayers, reading of the Scriptures, and preaching or exposition of the Scriptures. Their public prayers appear to have been by stated forms, and their Scripture readings strictly regulated. For "the five books of Moses were divided into as many sections or lessons as there are weeks in the year; one of which was read every Sabbath, and half of the same every Monday and Thursday, which were their days of assembly for the synagogue-service." Many were the occasions, on which our Saviour (and after Him the Apostles) is mentioned as not attending only, but bearing a part in these national services; and as the Apostles, who had the miraculous gift of tongues and of inspired prayers, thought fit to adopt in part these forms of worship, and to blend them with others of their own institution, a liturgical mode of offering up our prayers to God comes down to us, not recommended only by the example of holy men, but even enjoined by the judgment of those who spake by authority, and by command of the Spirit of God. It is a practice then, that "has received the sanction of authorities, which it would be more than presumptuous to impeach, or controvert."

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Bingham,
b. xiii. c. 5.
s. 4.

Lightfoot,
Temple
Service,
c. ix. s. 4.
Bingham,
ut supra.

See the
Classification
of the
Psalms,
prefixed to
Bp. Hors-
ley's Trans-
lation.

Bingham,
ut supra.

Luke iv. 16.
Mark i. 39.
Acts xiii. 15;
xviii. 4.

Bp. Jebb's
Pract.
Theol.
Disc. ii.
p. 21.

There can be no question, that the primitive Church followed the known practice of the Apostles, from the earliest times, in adopting set forms of public worship, if not of private devotion. Many are the allusions, in the writings of the

Clem. Rom.
ad Cor. 41.
Ignat. ad
Magnes. 7.

LECTURE early Fathers³, to liturgical services; and though there is
 XLVI. little doubt, that they were not originally committed to writing,
 but preserved by memory and practice,—there seems to be
 as little question, that a general uniformity, in this respect,
 was preserved in the several Churches. Catholic antiquity
 points to St. James and St. Mark, as the generally received
 authors of the prayers, which were afterwards expanded into
 the liturgies of the Oriental and Alexandrian Churches; and
 though it is true, that we cannot trace the existence of a com-
 plete written liturgy to an earlier period than the fourth
 century, when that of St. Basil of Cesarea came into general
 use throughout the Churches of Asia Minor, and that of
 St. Chrysostom prevailed in the Constantinopolitan district,
 yet there is abundant testimony of their use long before, and
 for their constant continuance. “It is impossible,” says
 Palmer, “to peruse the notices supplied by the Fathers, with-
 out perceiving that the baptized Christians were supposed to
 be familiar with every part of the Service; and continual allu-
 sions are made to various particulars as well known, which
 it would be impossible to explain, except by referring to the
 Liturgies still extant. The order of the parts was always pre-
 served; the same rites and ceremonies continually repeated;
 the same ideas and language, without material variation,
 transmitted from generation to generation. The people
 always knew the precise point at which they were to repeat
 their responses, chant their sacred hymn, or join in the well
 known prayer⁴.”

Palmer's
 Orig. Lit.
 p. 9.
 Apost.
 Constitut.
 lib. viii.
 35. 39.
 Concil. in
 Trull.
 Can. 32.

A.D. 370.
 Palmer,
 ut supra.

Palmer's
 Orig.
 Lit. p. 9.
 See also
 Bingham,
 xiii. c. 5.

³ St. Clement says, (as in the margin,) *Μὴ παρεκβαίνων τὸν ὠρισμένον τῆς λειτουργίας αὐτοῦ (τ. ε. Θεοῦ) κανόνα, ἐν σεμνότητι.* See also s. 40, where the Jewish Church is manifestly regarded as the type of the Christian Church, and where he “insists, that, as God has prescribed stated times, and liturgical services, so He hath ordained, by what particular persons He willeth them to be offered.” W. D. Conybeare's Bampton Lect. ii. p. 68.

⁴ Testimonies to the existence of forms in the Church. Century 1st, Clemens Rom. ad Cor. 41; Ignatius, ad Magnes. 7; Philo de Vitâ Contemplativâ, tom. ii. p. 1214; Euseb. lib. ii. c. 17; Hieron. Catal. Scrip. Eccl. c. 21. Century 2nd, Soerat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 8; Justini Apol. i. s. 61. ii. s. 12; Irenæus, lib. i. c. 1; Const. Apostol. lib. viii. c. 12; Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. c. 6; Tertull. de Bapt. c. 13. The collection of public prayers in the Apostolic Constitutions seems to have been the parent stock, of most of the liturgies in use at a subsequent period, vid. lib. vii. 47, 48; viii. 6—9. 35—39.

The practice, then, of addressing the Deity in well-weighed and well-digested terms, in preference to offering Him the spontaneous homage of a moment of enthusiasm or fancied semi-inspiration, comes down to us sanctioned by the known usages of that Church, whose leading principles were established by God Himself. It is supported by the examples of a David, a Solomon, a Josiah, and an Ezra: confirmed both by the precepts of Christ, who, as we have seen, condensed existing formularies into one perfect prayer; and by His example, in that He conformed, in His human capacity as a Jew, to the services of that Church, under whose protection He was born:—strengthened by the example of those gifted Twelve, who spake more with the tongues of angels than of men, and who were guided, in all that they established, by the restraining or persuading Spirit of God; and lastly, by the example, not only of their pupils and immediate successors, but by that of the wise, the good, and the pious, of nearly nineteen centuries.

For nearly seventeen of these centuries, all branches of the Church of Christ, differing, as they might and did, in many most important points, were yet unanimous in acting upon the Scriptural rule, “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God.” For Eccl. v. 2. this long period they held, that as it would be indecent, if we were going to address a human sovereign, to permit one of our number to utter in the royal presence any unpremeditated absurdity, which the impulse of the moment might suggest; so, it would be not less indecent, to permit God’s ordained priests “to proffer at the footstool of the King of kings a petition, in the name of the Church, of which the Church had no previous cognizance; to require the people to say ‘Amen’ to prayers they had never considered, or to offer as joint prayers, what they had never agreed to offer.” Are See Dr. Hook’s Ch. Dict. Art. Formulary. we to suppose, then, that a darkness rested upon the Jewish and Apostolic Churches, which was first cleared away by the more enlightened spirituality of the schismatics of the sixteenth century? Were they, or their successors, all in error, betraying the souls of men by an awful delusion, or still more awful hypocrisy,—fettering the free spirit of prayer, curbing the aspirations of the soul to Godward, when they one and

LECTURE XLVI. all persisted in regulating their public devotions by appointed formularies, instead of disregarding the wise man's judgment, "keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools?" If we of the nineteenth century are wrong in saying "no" to these questions, and in advocating forms of prayer, as being most agreeable to the revealed mind of God, as well as more suitable to our weakness and our wants,—Verily, then, we are wrong in goodly company; wrong with the holy men of old, who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" wrong with those delegates of heaven, who were ordained to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to instruct mankind to worship God in Spirit and in truth; wrong with those, who received their rules of doctrine and of discipline from the lips of those first messengers of the covenant, who acted under their counsel, taught under their direction, and preached by their appointment. Yea, we are wrong,—if we may, without offence, use such an expression,—with our blessed Lord Himself. Say we not well, that we had rather have the credit of being thus wrong with these, than think for an instant, that we can be right with the neologian of some two centuries' standing, and with his successors and admirers?

But, to say nothing of these high authorities which, one would think, to the true disciple of Christ, would set the question beyond cavil or dispute,—it is not difficult to shew, that the advantages are on the side of an established form of public prayer. Words, which have descended to us as a rich legacy from Apostolic times, and have stood the test of centuries; words, carefully weighed, and culled from the collected wisdom of many a by-gone age; words, the result of prayerful and mature deliberation, are (to say the least) more likely to be devotional in their spirit, and intelligible in their structure, than the off-hand effusions of an individual, however personally pious or scholar-like he may be, and lawfully called, withal, to exercise the functions of a Christian priest. The public prayers of such as these can we alone consider; for to suppose for one instant, that the unlettered mechanic, the unlawfully called, the unbidden intruder into the sanctuary, can handle, without offence, the high and holy things apper-

taining to the solemn sacrifice of congregational prayer, were an outrage upon common sense, and a defiance of the ordinances of God. LECTURE
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A liturgy, such as is that of the Church of England in its several parts of prayer, thanksgiving, response, and psalmody, gives to a modern congregation the same high spiritual privilege, which they of the primitive Church possessed,—namely, that of bearing their part in the public worship of God; that of raising the voice to His honour, as well as lifting up the heart in supplication for the supply of their spiritual wants. The privilege, thus secured to them, is one which grew into gradual desuetude, as the increasing corruptions of popery, step by step, defiled the once pure discipline of Apostolic days,—putting forward, one by one, the traditions of men for the judgment of the Catholic Church of Christ;—and it is one, which in this country was revived, if not in full force, at least with no small portion of its pristine vigour, at the Reformation.

A liturgy again, such as we possess, rich in the accumulated wisdom of ages, preserves that decent order, that uniformity in the Church, which is one of the surest bonds of union; nay, perhaps, the only effectual means of acting upon the Apostolic precept, “let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” It puts a check upon enthusiasm,—Phil. iii. 16. it provides a safeguard against ignorance: for even should an unworthy shepherd creep into the charge of any portion of Christ’s fold,—let his lack of information be what it may, let him be deficient in zeal, in energy, in power, in spirituality;—here, at least, is one portion of God’s services, and that too the most important, in which he cannot mislead or bewilder those who are earnest in their Christian profession. It is thus that the Church makes perpetual provision for purity and consistency of doctrine, as far as human foresight can effect so desirable an object. In her liturgy, the cardinal points of Christianity are all laid down in so scriptural, so plain, so straightforward a manner, that, though an expression or two, here and there, may appear somewhat obscure, because time has rendered them well-nigh obsolete, few intellects are of so humble a kind, as to be entirely ignorant of their general tenor. Appealing to the Scriptures as its

LECTURE standard, deriving from that holy source its every statement⁵;
 { XLVI. } rejecting nothing that was primitive, on the sorry plea that it had been retained by popery; comforting in its ordinances, apostolic in its ceremonies, Catholic in its doctrines,—the Liturgy of the Church of England stands an imperishable record of God's unspeakable mercy, in having bestowed upon us this legitimate daughter of the Bible.

Independently of these blessings, which a liturgical form of worship thus secures for a Church desirous to be at unity within itself, it should not be forgotten,—that the strongest opponent of forms is, after all, (if he be a congregational worshipper,) dependent upon whatever form of words his preacher may please to put before him,—a form that he knows not whether he can follow with his heart, or agree to in his judgment, until it be uttered;—a form *to* which he may indeed *listen*, but *with* which it were most difficult to *pray*.

⁵ See an excellent work, "The Liturgy Compared with the Bible," by the Rev. Henry Ives Bailey, published by "the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge."

LECTURE XLVII.

PHIL. iv. 20.

“Unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever.”

ALTHOUGH many passages of Scripture sanctioned the Jewish practice of addressing God by the title of “Father,” yet, as their relationship was rather that of subjects to a sovereign, than one of children to a parent, it was impossible for them (or indeed for any one, who did not acknowledge Jesus Christ to be God the Son,) to use these words in the same comprehensive and endearing sense, as does the Christian.

We have seen, that, during several centuries of the Primitive Church, the use of this prayer was denied to the unbaptized, and to all who were not in full communion with the Church; and therefore we are not surprised to find that, from the earliest times, a mystical sense was attached to the words “our Father,” as applicable to the Christian religion only; a sense, which was carefully concealed from the catechumen and the neophyte, to whom the full development of the more mysterious principles of their faith was left unexplained. In those days it would seem, that they acted upon the Apostolic principle, of giving to the “babes in Christ” the “sincere milk of the word,” whilst the strong meat was reserved for the mature Christian. And, even as our Saviour forbore to put forth doctrines to His disciples, which, at that time, they were not able to understand; so they measured their instructions by the capacity of the scholar, and made their lessons in Christian principles and ethics strictly progressive. Once baptized, he was gradually ushered into all the privileges of sonship, and into the perfect knowledge of the peculiar doctrines as well as duties, with which those privileges were connected. “The new man, born

LECTURE
XLVII.

Ps. lxxviii. 5.
Prov. iii. 12.
Jer. xxxi. 9.
Mal. i. 6;
ii. 10.
1 Chron.
xxix. 10.
Isa. lxiv. 8.
See
Comber,
in loc.
sup. Lec.
xlv. p. 554.

1 Pet. ii. 2.
1 Cor. iii.
1. 2.
Heb. v. 12.
14.

John xvi.
12.

LECTURE again, and restored to his God by His grace, first of all says, XLVII. 'Father,' because he has now become a son."

Cyp. de
Orat. Tr. vii.
s. 5.

But our knowledge is not limited to the bare fact, that we are privileged thus to approach to God, through the mediation of Christ, with the affections of a child. The Scriptures are full of detailed information, as to the manner in which God has vouchsafed to exhibit Himself in so endearing a character. It is He who created man out of the dust of the earth, and made him after His own image. When too that image was destroyed by the transgression of our first parents, it was He who gave to man the capability of its restoration. It is He who has furnished us with means, whereby we, upon our rightly using the appeal made to our faith, are adopted into His family, and are invested with the titles and privileges belonging to that heavenly relationship. From the cradle to the grave He deals with us, even as a tender father would regard his offspring. It is He who supplies the wants of the soul, remembering also the necessities of the body; imparting to the one all things required for its spiritual health,—the strength that may enable it to walk, as becometh the high destiny which is the result of its adoption,—the knowledge that may make it wise unto salvation; whilst He bestows upon its mortal companion that care and support, which may prevent it from sinking beneath the pressure of its woes and wants. It is He that provides us with food and clothing; He who preserves us in all our troubles, helps us in our difficulties, sustains us in our temptations, bears with us in our waywardness, as knowing our infirmities,—and pardons our transgressions, as having respect unto our instability. Are we ignorant? He teaches us. In error? He corrects us. In sorrow? He soothes us. Throughout all the chequered scenes of life, the spiritualized eye of the converted child of God can mark the traces of His parental care and love;—can see Him, by the light of faith, dealing with us by that wonderful system of unseen providential arrangements, which the worldly call accidents, and the infidel regard as the stern decrees of fate. But it is not only for the necessities of this our mortal life that He has provided. Our Father's far-seeing eye has looked beyond the grave; and "according to His abundant mercy He hath begotten us

again unto a lively hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." LECTURE XLVII. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. My-
 terious and wonderful affection! Mysterious, in that we are perfectly bewildered in attempting to explain how it is, that we, weak and worthless and hourly rebellious as we are, can, for an instant, engage the regard of God; much less can we understand how it comes to pass, that we should experience it throughout every moment of our existence: and it is wonderful, to know that this love is so universal, that its anxieties extend, though in different degrees, to the Christian and the heretic, the saint and the sinner, the worshipper and the infidel; and yet is so individually watchful, that we may say to each separate Christian,—

"Thou art as much His care, as if beside
 Nor man nor angel lived in heaven or earth."

Christian
 year.

Well, then, may we exclaim with the sainted John, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!"

1 John iii. 1.

But let us not so far deceive ourselves as to believe, that it is enough to have the title of children of God; or safe to make an outward boast of our privilege, whilst inwardly we regard it with as little reverence, as the profane Esau looked upon his birthright. "Ye are all the children of God," says St. Paul,—but how? "by faith in Christ Jesus." A declaration, which implies the necessity of our "giving all diligence to add to our faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." Thus the fruitfulness of our faith will be the test of our abiding in Christ, of our being children of God in something more than name. And how is this evidenced? Christ Himself has told us. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Precisely the same divine lesson is inculcated, when we are bidden to address God, not as "my Father," but as "our Father." "Our prayer," says St. Cyprian, "is general and for all; and when we pray, we pray not for one person, but for us all, because we all are one." So too St. Ambrose:—"Who prays for himself alone, stands alone,"

Gal. iii. 26.

2 Pet. i. 5—7.

John xiii. 35.

Cyp. de
 Orat.
 Tr. vii. 4.

- LECTURE XLVII. with no one else to pray for him." The child of God, then, who is desirous to prove his affection towards his heavenly Parent, and so to draw down the expression of His love towards himself, will bear in mind, that as no just father will shew favour to a child, who exhibits hatred, unkindness, or even unconcern towards his brethren;—so, the dews of heavenly grace will not,—indeed, to take the simple language of Scripture, cannot descend upon the head of him who disregards the Apostolic counsel, "Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise, blessing." He will rather recollect that, whatever may be our differences of country, language, opinion, faith,—we are still members of the same mystical brotherhood, as children of our common Parent:—having indeed a dearer and a closer tie with that fold within the fold, those elect of God's election,—“the household of faith;” but still, not excluding from the active exercise of our brotherly love the worst profligate of the sons of Adam. “Have we not all one Father?” asks the prophet,—“Hath not one God created us?” As surely, then, as a dutiful son will strive to reclaim an erring brother,—will spare no exertion to bring him to a sense of his filial duty, and will cheerfully make many personal sacrifices so that he may succeed in reconciling him to his father,—so surely will the Christian, who knows the value of a soul for which Christ died, be forward in endeavouring to excite within it a conviction of its danger and its responsibility. He will not stand aloof from his backsliding brother, through any fear of the hopelessness of his task;—and, even should he be driven from his purpose by curses and violence, he will know full well, that, though the ungodly may not, and will not pray for themselves, they cannot check that
- Quoted in Anderson on the Lord's Prayer.
- Mark xi. 26.
- 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9.
- Mal. ii. 10.
- James v. 16.
- “effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man,” which mounts to heaven, unbidden, in their behalf; and pleads to their common Parent for their conversion and forgiveness.

But besides these duties towards our brethren, which are taught us by this clause of the prayer, we are further reminded of other obligations which they impose upon us to Godward. “If I be a Father, where is mine honour? saith the Lord of hosts.” As it would be the daily study of the dutiful and affectionate child, to prove his sense of all that

Mal. i. 6.

his parent had done for him, by the most assiduous offices of affection,—so will,—so must it be with the faithful child of God. He will not be content with a bare profession of his love,—words cost nothing: but, if it be an inworking principle,—without effort, spontaneously,—it will exhibit itself in his daily conduct. Does he recognize, as a duty enjoined by his heavenly Father, the plucking out of the right eye, or the cutting off of the hand or foot,—the parting, in short, with the dearest objects of his heart? There is no hesitation,—no arguing upon the point;—no attempt to make a compromise between the object that the natural man fain would keep, and the knowledge that the spiritual man has acquired of its sinfulness. Obedience follows close upon conviction; and both are accompanied by an earnest prayer to be directed aright. The tenor of his conduct is not like that of the disobedient son in the parable. When God calleth him to work in His vineyard, his answer is not, “I go, sir, and he goeth not;” but there is, instead, the cheerful, childlike, confiding obedience of the young Samuel,—“Speak; for thy servant heareth.” And so, in every dispensation of Providence, there is the same childlike trust in his Father’s wisdom; the same conviction, that his Father cannot mislead, and will not forsake him;—his Father, who from his very cradle has shewn him every mark of love, who has before proved Himself both able and willing to save His children to the utmost;—his Father, who, when he went forth as a pilgrim into the world, gave him this encouraging promise, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”

LECTURE
XLVII.Matt. xviii.
8, 9.Matt. xxi.
23—30.1 Sam. iii.
10.

Ps. l. 15.

The prayer directs us to address ourselves to “our Father which is in heaven.” If there, then, resides our Father, there too must be our abiding home,—and it will be to our Father’s house that our thoughts, and hopes, and longings, all will point, as to the place of peace and rest. Strangers and pilgrims as we are confessedly on the earth, it is ours to “desire a better country, that is, a heavenly;” “a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” The child of God, then, will strive to have his “conversation in heaven:” there will his thoughts be chiefly engaged, and he will endeavour to inform himself of what is passing there

Heb. xi. 16.
Ib. 10.
Phil. iii. 20.
πολίτευμα,
Citizenship,
and the
rights be-
longing
thereto.
See c. i. 27.

LECTURE XLVII. amongst its inhabitants, and of what is expected at his hands as a member of the family. Though absent, he will feel that, as a partaker in its interests, a sharer in its sympathies, an expectant of its comforts,—the tenor of his life must be such as to bring neither disgrace upon his kindred, nor scandal to himself. So far from shrinking from the contemplation of that hour which shall, by his Father's providence, recall him home,—he will not only, with the holy Paul, be content to die, as knowing “that to him to die is gain,”—but like him, he will desire to depart, knowing that “to be with Christ is far better,” than to struggle onwards with the sins and temptations of this sad scene of trial. Like an exile long banished from his home, he will yearn for the summons that bids him back again; and, though he may have erred during his long pilgrimage, and may feel himself compelled to say, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son,”—how can he despair of being received with welcome upon his return, when angels are continually on the watch to rejoice at his repentance; and when Christ Himself declares, “him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out?”

In further praying that God's name may be hallowed, or made holy, we do not mean to say, that it is possible for men or demons really to unhallow that name, which the word of the Spirit has pronounced “holy and reverend.” “The name of God is in its own nature holy, whether we say so or not: but, since it is sometimes profaned among sinners, we pray, that in *us* God's name may be hallowed; not that it becomes holy from not being holy, but because it becomes holy in us, when we become holy, and do things worthy of holiness.” We offer up this petition, then, “not as wishing for God to be made holy by our prayers, but asking of Him, for His name to be kept holy in us.” We pray “that we, who have been sanctified in baptism, may persevere such as we have begun. For this we daily make petition; since we need a daily sanctification, in order that we, who sin day by day, may cleanse afresh our offences by a continual sanctification.” If, then, we are sincere in our profession, we shall continue “instant in prayer,” that we may “sanctify the Lord God in our hearts,” that we may “glorify God in

Phil. i. 21.

1b. 23.

Luke xv.
18, 19.

John vi. 37.

Comber,
in loc.
Ps. cxi. 9.Cyril.
Catech. Lect.
23. Myst. 5.
s. 12.Cypr. Tr.
vii. 7.

Rom. xii. 12.

1 Pet. iii. 15.

our body and in our spirit, which are God's." And so the child of God will strive to mould his habits, to discipline his temper, to regulate his affections, to control his passions, and to guard his speech; "providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men," that the name of God may not be blasphemed through him amongst the unbelievers; but that others, as yet aliens to the grace of God, may be induced, from his Christian conversation, to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," and to "report that God is in them of a truth." Careful himself to shew "sound speech that cannot be condemned," as knowing that even for every idle word he must give account, the true child of God cannot tamely hear others talk lightly of his Father,—speak irreverently of His person,—set at nought His counsels, neglect His worship, profane His sabbaths, despise His sacraments, deride His ministers, speak evil of His children, or blaspheme His holy name. He will promptly assert his Father's honour through good report and evil report. The unthinking may mock, and the infidel may sneer; but he, at least, will never be backward in shewing his anxiety, that all, who are called His children, should feel the full value of their adoption, and say in David's words, and with David's spirit, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name." He prays, in this clause, that we, and all who profess and call themselves Christians, may be "holy in all manner of conversation;" endeavouring so to live in God's presence in the world, as to realize, even on earth, something of that pure glow of devotion, with which the angels, who surround His everlasting throne, sing their glad song of "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

LECTURE
XLVII.

1 Cor. vi. 20.

2 Cor. viii. 21.

See Rom. ii. 24.

1 Chron. xvi. 29.

1 Cor. xiv. 25.

Tit. ii. 8.

Col. iv. 6.

Matt. xii. 36.

Ps. ciii. 1.

1 Pet. i. 15.

Rev. iv. 8.

And how stirring an appeal to the sincerity of the professing Christian, is made in the succeeding clause, "Thy kingdom come!" We there pray, first, that the kingdom of grace may reign within our own hearts; that "the word of Christ may dwell in us richly in all wisdom;" "that it may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise of God's holy name." Is the child of God, then, anxious to have the question solved, "Is this kingdom of grace indeed within my soul?" He will not trust to internal

Coloss. iii. 16.

Collect after the Offertory.

LECTURE
XLVII. impressions for the answer, for he knows, that both self-love and self-righteousness may unite in tempting him to place too high an estimate, upon his presumed advancement in Christian knowledge and practice: he will straightway examine himself upon the real character of his repentance, and his faith; he will sit in judgment upon his charity,—his humility,—his delight in God's service,—his earnestness in prayer,—his study of His word, and his attendance upon the outward means of grace. In one word, he will test his spirituality by his obedience.

But as the good subject, living under a good government, is ever anxious that all may know its excellence, and be induced to be partakers of its privileges and blessings,—so will the child of God entertain a holy zeal, for the extension of this kingdom of grace. It will be his daily prayer, that God may be pleased to implant a saving knowledge of Christ, crucified for the redemption of a sinful world, in the hearts of all professing Christians,—that He may include within His providential election those benighted nations, to whom the glad tidings of the Gospel have not yet been preached, or, if preached, but imperfectly understood and loved by them. Valuing highly, as he must, his own spiritual blessings, and loving, as he will, that world for which Christ died, and knowing that God “willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live;” his anxieties will not begin and end with the salvation of his own soul. He will earnestly pray unto his Father, that it may please Him to “have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, and to take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of His word; and so to fetch them home to his flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Nor will he be satisfied with prayers alone. In humble faith that God will eventually bless the means, which He puts it into the hearts of men to use for this glorious purpose; relying on the promise, “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days;” content to plant and to water, whilst he leaves it to God to give the increase, the true child of God will promote the Christian school, and advocate the Christian mission. He will give

Collect for
Good Fri-
day.

Ecc. xi. 1.

liberally in God's name, and for God's honour: he will not count the cost, in striving to bring the knowledge of the way of salvation to all, who as yet are ignorant of the name of Christ. All worldly interest will be dust in the balance, compared with the desire that the sinner at home, and the heathen abroad, should equally exclaim, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Rom. x. 15.

What, then, if the professed Christian has been supine in availing himself of all human means, whereby he may contribute to work out God's declared will, that none should perish, "but that all should come to repentance?" What, if he has been slack in this labour of love,—indifferent to the extension of Christ's spiritual kingdom at home or abroad,—is it possible that he can say, Lord, "thy kingdom come," without mockery? And is he not supine, is he not slack, is he not indifferent, if he omits any opportunity of bettering the moral and spiritual condition of his fellow-creatures, wherever and whenever God has opened a door of usefulness for him? And what are too commonly the alleged reasons for this omission? The cost is great; the labour much; the success uncertain; the task not man's, but God's; the necessity therefore of exertion not proved. All, worldly subterfuges,—for arguments they are not,—evidences of that lukewarmness in God's service, for which the Church of Laodicea was both rebuked and condemned! The child will find a holy joy in being permitted to join himself to his Father's work: he will sow in faith,—content, if distant generations reap the harvest;—well satisfied, if his own knowledge, that his labours have been blessed, be deferred unto that hour when we shall know even as we are known.

2 Pet. iii. 9.

Rev. iii. 14—16.
1 Cor. xiii. 12.

But there is another, and a more awful meaning attached to the words, "thy kingdom come." It is not only for the influence of the kingdom of grace over his own heart, not only for its extension throughout the world, that the Christian asks at the hands of his heavenly Father. He prays also for the coming of the kingdom of glory: that it may please God "shortly to accomplish the number of His elect, and to hasten His kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of His holy name, may have our

1 Cor. xiii. 12.

12.

LECTURE
XLVII.Col. in
Bur. Ser.

Phil. i. 21.

2 Cor. v.
10.2 Cor. v. 11.
Matt. iii. 7.

Phil. i. 23.

Col. in
Bapt. Ser.

1 Cor. xv. 55.

perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in His eternal and everlasting glory." He prays for the coming of the judgment day! Then will be unfolded, both to men and angels, those great mysteries which have been shut up from eternity in the Divine mind;—then will those, who have slept in Jesus, awake to the full enjoyment of those high spiritual privileges, of which, since death, they have had the foretaste; thus realizing anew the Apostle's declaration, "to me to die is gain." Then will their belief in a communion of saints (a communion but partially brought home to them before) be exchanged for the eternal certainty of its perfect enjoyment. Then will be brought to pass the declaration of the Apostle, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Alas! how many of those, who call themselves Christians, will then more distinctly perceive the delusions with which, throughout their lives, they have beguiled themselves to their perdition! How many will more clearly discover, in that awful hour, that it was through no phantasy of an overheated imagination, through no wiles of priestcraft, that the preacher warned them of the sure wages of unforsaken, and therefore unrepented sin; but that because they knew the terrors of the Lord, therefore they persuaded men "to flee from the wrath to come!" Is this an hour, then, that we are prepared, not only not to shrink from, but even to welcome, and to pray for? If there be any doubt or misgiving in our reply, let us judge ourselves, that we be not judged of the Lord. Let us solemnly ask of our own consciences,—have we striven so to cleanse and purify this temple of our body, as to render it (as far as human infirmity can do so) meet for the eternal indwelling of the Holy Ghost? Have we a godly yearning, even as had the Apostle Paul, "to depart and be with Christ;" looking thus on death, as the first step gained towards the possession of our future inheritance of glory? And does this yearning spring from a well-grounded assurance, that, as we have been "stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity," so we may exclaim with the same holy man, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Or does our desire to die mainly arise from

an impatient anxiety, to be rid of our pains, or sorrows, or trials here, attended, as such a desire often is, by an ill-defined hope that God will perhaps have mercy on our souls? It is a blessed thing to pray for the coming of the kingdom of glory, if here we have done our all, with the Spirit's help, "to crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin;" for "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." But well may that man shudder to pronounce the words, "thy kingdom come," if conscience even whispers the suspicion, that he, instead, has "crucified to himself the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." Earnestly, then, will the child of God, as he utters this petition, pray also, that "Almighty God may give him grace to cast away the works of darkness, and to put upon him the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life;—that in the last day, when Christ shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead, he may rise to the life immortal, through Him who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, now and for ever."

LECTURE
XLVII.

1 Cor. xv.
54.

Heb. vi. 6.

Coll. for the
first Sunday
in Adv.

"We further go on to say, 'Thy will be done, as in heaven so in earth;' not in order that God may do His own will, but that we may be enabled to do what He wills should be done by us." What that will is, with regard to our ourselves, may best be gathered from the earthly career of Him, who left us "an example that we should follow His steps." The Gospels, then, speak of Christ's complete resignation to His Father's will,—of His entire conformity to His Father's law. They tell of His piety, His holiness, His docility to His earthly parents, His zeal for His Father's honour, His delight in executing His bidding, His constant and active beneficence, His mild conciliating spirit, His tenderness even to the infirmities of men, His gentleness in their rebuke, His spotless innocence, His self-denial, His love for the souls of men, and His anxiety for their spiritual welfare. And this example is pressed upon us with greater force, when we call to mind, first, the exceeding sinfulness and ingratitude of those, whom He came to bless and to redeem; and secondly, that, from the beginning to the end of His earthly sojourning, the full consciousness, that He was God as well as man, must

Cyp. Tr. vii.
9.

1 Pet. ii. 21.

LECTURE have been ever present with Him. How great, then, must
 XLVII. have been His love for us, in that He was willing to bear

with our thanklessness, and to lay aside His own glory for a season, provided that He could "see of the travail of His
 Isa. liii. 11. soul, and be satisfied!" Some such conformity to the known

will of God, some such anxiety to consult that will, in all our earthly dealings and in every spiritual act, must be found in the Christian here (though it be at humble distance), before he can hope hereafter, to be welcomed to his eternal home with the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things:—enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "If the Son," says St. Cyprian, "was obedient in doing His Father's will, how much more ought the servant to be obe-

Matt. xxv.
23.

Cyp. ut sup. dient in doing the will of his Lord!" And beautifully has the same venerable Father of the Church sketched the leading features of this will; a sketch, which was as much the reflection of his own Christian conduct, as it was the result of his Christian knowledge! "The will of God," says he, "is what Christ has done and taught: it is humility in conduct, it is stedfastness in faith, scrupulousness in our words, rectitude in our deeds, mercy in our works, government in our habits; it is innocence of injuriousness, and patience under it, preserving peace with the brethren, loving God with all our heart, loving Him as our Father, and fearing Him as our God; accounting Christ before all things, because He accounted nothing before us, clinging inseparably to His love, being stationed with fortitude and faith at His cross, and, when the battle comes for His name and honour, maintaining in words that constancy which makes confession, in torture, that confidence which joins battle, and in death, that patience which receives the crown. This it is, to endeavour to be coheir with Christ; this it is to perform the commandment of God, and fulfil the will of the Father."

Cyp. ut sup.
10.

The child of God then, who is anxious to be perfect, "even as He which hath called him is perfect," will strive, with God's help, to add to his faith personal holiness, personal purity, love of God, charity to the brethren, prompt obedience, cheerful resignation, implicit trust. Where these are wanting, the spirit of Christ is wanting too. And here, again,

in the very principle, upon which this obedience must be founded, is our childlike feeling appealed to. It is not because God is stronger, and we are therefore compelled to submit, that we are counselled to endure His chastening. It is not because we cannot escape from the ills of life, and that murmuring even adds to their pressure, by keeping alive a morbidly-dissatisfied state of mind, that we are exhorted to bear them without flinching. A higher, and indeed a more comforting principle of submission is held out to us. It is because God, as a Father who has already proved His wisdom and His love, speaks to His children who have experienced both. He appeals to our parental feelings;—would we willingly afflict our own children, except for their lasting good? would we withhold from them any comfort, except we knew that to bestow it would be hurtful for them. So, in like manner, God assures us, that He “doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” That “like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.” That we are to “cast all our care upon Him, for He careth for us,” “and He shall sustain us.” Let, then, the infidel say what he pleases of the trammels of religion, as he calls them,—let him represent Christianity as a gloomy, austere, and morose faith,—let him look upon the Redeemer’s yoke as a badge of intolerable slavery; and let the nominal Christian strive, as he may, to shuffle off the responsibility which his baptismal covenant lays upon him,—let him, too, think himself secure in following his own will and way to the very full, whilst he serves his Maker at his convenience or caprice,—the child of God will be content to say with the holy Paul, “I know whom I have believed.” Thus, whilst the slightest cross or loss will ruffle the temper, and disturb the quiet of the ungodly or the worldly, it is our privilege, under the heaviest dispensations, if we have been “as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,” to be able both to say and to feel with the bereaved patriarch, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

LECTURE
XLVII.

Lam. iii. 33.

Ps. ciii. 13.

1 Pet. v. 7.

Ps. lv. 22.

2 Tim. i. 12.

Eph. vi. 6.

Job i. 21.

Coloss. iv.
12.

Nor is our knowledge confined to the simple fact, that we must “stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” The prayer informs us of the extent, to which this will is to be acted upon in our daily practice: “Thy will *be done* in

LECTURE earth, as it is in heaven." Thus, then, we both acknowledge
 XLVII. our obligation, and confess our duty to follow, as far as may
 be possible, the example of God's ministering angels, the inhabitants of that heaven, to which the child of God is taught to look as to his adopted home. And what is their office, what their occupations? They, the Scriptures tell us, who "excel in strength," "do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word:" they are always on the wing, to watch for His bidding, and to execute His judgments. Their delight is continually to hymn their Father's praises in heaven, and to be the ministers of His mercy to His children upon earth; they sympathize with the distresses, and watch over the pilgrimage of beings as far beneath Him as ourselves. Oh! could our prayer be accomplished in all its blessed comprehensive fulness; could man bow him down to seek his Maker's will, instead of following the corrupt bent of his own perverseness; could he seek it as the angels, with their ready, cheerful, and universal obedience,—with their pure love to God, with their deep affection for mankind¹,—"the world would wear another face than it does at present; and life and nature would be restored to what they lost, when the first man chose to follow his own will and ways, rather than the will and commandment of his Creator!" There would be no impurity, no lukewarmness, no strife, no self-will; but a deep and holy love towards God, and a cheerful submission to all His dispensations, whether for weal or woe: there would be so earnest a desire to prove the reality of this love, by the display of a kindred spirit towards man, that the hymn, which angels sang at the Redeemer's birth, would touch upon a responsive chord in the heart of every Christian, until peace on earth and goodwill to men would be as much a human principle, as an angelic song.

Townson's
Discourses,
xiv. p. 166.

Alas! how far from resembling this glorious picture of another Eden realized on earth, is the sad contrast presented by the practice of the Christian world! It is not often that

¹ "I remember to have heard, that when the question was once put, 'How is the will of God done in heaven?'—the answer was made, 'It is done by the angels in heaven immediately, diligently, always, altogether, with all their strength, and *without asking any questions about it.*'" Anderson on the Lord's Prayer, p. 43, 3rd ed.

the professed child of God lives in this angelic conformity ; ^{LECTURE XLVII.} his soul subject to his God, and his passions kept under by his soul. Instead of searching anxiously, how he may execute his Maker's whole will, it would seem that the search is very commonly the other way ; that his ingenuity is tasked to find out, how little of that will he may do without incurring the censure of the world, or the too clamorous reproaches of his conscience. Instead of flying with an alacrity, quickened by gratitude, to perform even His ordinary every-day injunctions,—like a disobedient servant, when his master's eye is, as he thinks, removed, his service is too often tardy, his work slack, his distaste ill concealed. How eagerly would the same person hasten to execute the commands of his earthly sovereign ! then, every wish would be studied, every word observed, every look watched, every wish anticipated. Obedience, then, would be a privilege, not a task ; an honour to be courted, not a burden to be complained of. Instead of a cheerful submission to the decrees of Providence, how often is there, at one time, a secret dissatisfaction,—at another, an open complaint,—that His ways are unequal, and His judgment partial ! Instead of a childlike trust in the wisdom and the mercy of His dispensations, how often is there murmuring at much that is given, as well as at all that is withheld ! We forget too frequently, that were our lot in life different from what God has decreed it,—were it cast after our own wishes,—it might be attended by such temptations, as would endanger at least, if not destroy the soul's eternal welfare.

Many, again, are content, and think that they have done enough for every Christian purpose, if they attend their church, read the Scriptures, join in the holy communion, are regular in their prayers, are exact, in short, in observing the outward ordinances of religion ; compounding thus, by adherence to the forms of Christianity, for the neglect or violation of its high moral and spiritual duties. There is little here of that godly anxiety, which the Apostle felt, to “ spend and be spent ” for Christ's sake : little remembrance of the Saviour's caution, “ not every one that *saieth* unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Like Saul, the nominal Christian is determined to choose for himself the

2 Cor. xii.
15.

Matt. vii. 21.

LECTURE points of conformity to God's will: like him, he will deceive
 XLVII. himself in believing, that there may be some disobedience
 and much neglect, provided that there be a *shew* of acting
 upon Gospel principles, when adherence to them involves no
 very great self-denial or exertion. To him then, as to the
 wilful Jewish monarch, will the prophet's warning equally
 apply; "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to
 hearken than the fat of rams." Let him not, unwarned at least,
 deprive himself of the glorious privilege and of the blessed
 reward, attached to Christian obedience. The privilege, is that
 of kinship to Christ, for "Whosoever," said the Saviour,
 "shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my
 sister, and mother." The reward, is a participation in that in-
 heritance which Christ has purchased for us, when the world
 and the lust thereof shall both have passed away, when "he
 that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

1 Sam. xv.
22.

Mark iii. 35.

1 John ii. 17.

Thus far we "desire our Lord God, our Heavenly Father,
 who is the Giver of all goodness, to send His grace unto us,
 and to all people, that we may worship Him, serve Him, and
 obey Him as we ought to do." And these "three petitions
 are addressed to God by way of adoration. In the first, the
 soul puts on the affections of a child, and divests itself of its
 own interest, offering itself up wholly to the designs and glori-
 fications of God. In the second, it puts on the relation and
 duty of a subject to her legitimate prince, seeking the pro-
 motion of his legal interest. In the third, she puts on the
 affection of a spouse, loving the same love, and choosing the
 same objects, and delighting in unions and conformities." And
 she will strive, in all, to bear about her the conscio-
 usness of her own weakness and insufficiency; to repose with
 childlike confidence upon her heavenly Parent's wisdom, and
 so to say, in the humble yet trusting spirit of the pious David,
 "teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God."

Jeremy
Taylor,
Life of
Christ,
Disc. xii.
s. 6.

Ps. cxliii.
10.

LECTURE XLVIII.

PHIL. iv. 6.

"In every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

It remains to consider that part of the Lord's prayer, in which, under the comprehensive terms of daily bread, forgiveness of sins, deliverance from temptation and from evil, we pray, with reference to the past, the present, and the future, for the bestowal of all temporal and spiritual blessings. LECTURE
XLVIII.

In the words, "give us this day our daily bread," we pray unto God, that He will "send us all things that be needful, both for our souls and bodies." The simplicity of the petition is, at once, a lesson and a remembrancer to him, who has professed to abjure the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all that can foster or minister to the lusts and passions of the flesh. What has he to do with prayer for aught, beyond the moderate supply of his daily wants, who has made so solemn a renunciation,—who has declared that his profession is, "to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him,"—unto Him, who had not where to lay His head,—unto Him, whose meat it was to do His Father's will? What has he to do with prayer for riches, whose record of salvation is full to overflowing with awful warnings against the peril even of their possession? The true child of God knows that wealth is indeed a questionable good, involving, as it does, the temptation to spend it upon self; and weaning, as it will too commonly, his affections from Him whose demand is, "My son, give Me thine heart." The Christian knows, or ought to know, with the Apostle Paul, that, to the professed seeker after the unsearchable riches of Christ, earthly treasures "are not

Office for
Baptism.

John iv. 34.

Prov. xxiii.
26.

LECTURE XLVIII.
 Cyp. Tr. vii. 14.
 Prov. xxx. 8, 9.
 1 Tim. vi. 8.

only despicable, but are also dangerous: that in them is the root of seductive evils, misleading the blindness of the human heart by a concealed deception." And he will therefore pray, in the spirit of Agur, Lord, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." He must tread, though it may be at humble distance, in the steps of that self-denying man of God, whose daily practice was a commentary upon his own precept, "having food and raiment let us be therewith content."

Ps. lv. 17.
 Matt. vi. 34.
 Cyp. Tr. vii. 14.

And it must be his daily prayer, as recognizing the great truth, that day by day is his dependence upon God for his every portion of earthly comfort. Like as the children of Israel were bidden, in the desert, to look for their daily food at the hands of their heavenly Provisioner,—so must, so will it be with the devout child of God. Like David he will say, "at evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice." He will understand full well, if his communion with God is scanty and infrequent,—a faint Sabbath service, not a daily earnest offering,—that then a silence and a strangeness must, of necessity, arise between the soul and its spiritual Parent. And it will be his modest prayer:—"he who has begun to be a disciple of Christ, forsaking all things after the commandment of his Master, has but his food to ask for to-day, without indulging excessive longings in his prayer, as the Lord again prescribes and teaches: 'Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Justly therefore does the disciple of Christ make petition for to-day's provision, since he is forbidden to take thought for to-morrow:—it were a self-contradicting and incompatible thing, for us, who pray that the kingdom of God may quickly come, to be looking unto long life in the world below."

But what,—the gainsayer may demand,—what have the rich to do with this portion of the prayer of Jesus? They surely need not pray for the supply of their daily earthly wants,—however they may be required to ask for their daily spiritual sustenance. They, it may be urged, have no anxiety

respecting their worldly well-being: the tangible enjoyment of their wealth and honour is sufficient, to relieve them from the necessity of begging their daily bread from God, and of acknowledging their daily dependence upon Him. So thought the rich fool in the parable, who “made merry in his stores, even that night when he was to die; and, while life was ceasing from his hands, life’s multiplied provision still employed his thought.” So reasoned Pharaoh, until the sea’s returning waters became the commissioned teachers of another lesson. So dreamed Sennacherib, when he laid him down at night amidst the hosts that encamped around the beleaguered city of Jerusalem, already, in his eyes, the captive of his bow and spear: but the morrow dawned upon the wreck of all his power, and found him alone amidst the scene of desolation,—the lord of corpses, not of warriors; a fugitive, not a conqueror; a disgraced, not a triumphant sovereign.

LECTURE XLVIII.
Luke xii. 19.

Cyp. ut sup.

These,—and there are a thousand others,—these are instructive monuments of the uncertain tenure, upon which the richest and the mightiest are allowed to hold their substance.

And if the Christian’s faith should falter in an hour of more than common trial;—if prayers, apparently ungranted, —and wants, to his thinking unsupplied, should tempt him to doubt God’s willingness to hear or give; let him not only be comforted and strengthened by the evident truth, that God’s permission, yea command, to offer up the prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread,” implies that He is “more ready to hear than we to pray, and is wont to give more than either we desire or deserve;”—but let him be reassured by the express promises of God. It is written, “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers:” “He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them.” And again, it is the Saviour’s pledge, “all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.” It is His assurance, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Col. for
12th Sun.
aft. Trin.

1 Pet. iii. 12.

Ps. cxlv. 19.

Matt. xxi.
22.

1b. vi. 38.

But to whom are these pledges and assurances given? To the devout,—to the believing,—to the seekers after the hidden treasures of God’s spiritual kingdom. To them, but to them only, is God’s word of covenant fulfilled,—He “will not

LECTURE XLVIII.
 Prov. x. 3. suffer the soul of the *righteous* to famish." They, but they alone, may rest confidently upon the heaven-taught experience of the prophet-king of Israel; "I have been young, and now am old: yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." The impenitent, the unbelieving, the unrighteous, have no cause to complain, if God's promise is unfulfilled to them; it is conditional.

Ps. xxxvii.
 25.

Cyp. Tr. vii.
 13.

But there is a better and a more enduring bread, for which the Christian prays,—the bread of life; the indwelling of that Spirit of Christ within our souls, without which we are none of His. "Christ is the bread of life," says the holy Cyprian, "and this bread belongs not to all men, but to us; and, as we say 'our Father,' because the Father of the understanding and believing, so we speak of our bread, because Christ is the bread of us, who appertain to His body."

John vi. 51.
 Cyp. ut sup.

There was a time, when the Christian world acted up to the full spirit of this portion of the prayer of Jesus; when it rejoiced daily to exercise the glorious privilege implied in it; when it pressed forward daily to receive, in the blessed Eucharist, this bread from heaven; and as daily prayed, that her children might be meet partakers of that holy mystery. "This bread," (it is the testimony of the illustrious father above quoted,) "we pray that it be given us day by day, lest we who are in Christ, and who daily receive the Eucharist for food of salvation, should, by the admission of any grievous crime, and on being therefore shut out from communion and forbidden the heavenly bread, be separated from the body of Christ, according as Himself preaches and forewarns; 'I am the bread of life which came down from heaven. If any man eat of My bread, he shall live for ever. But the bread that I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world.'"

But, alas! the lapse of ages has deadened that keen sense of spiritual privilege which animated them of old; and infrequent communion,—a neglected sanctuary,—prayers faint and cold,—bespeak, at once, a lack of Catholic union with reference to men, and both injustice and neglect to Godward. It would almost seem, that the professing Christian world had forgotten the declaration of Christ, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

John vi. 53.

“After supply of food, next pardon for sin is asked for; that he who is fed of God, may live in God, and not only the present passing life be provided for, but the eternal also;” whereunto we may come, if, in accordance with our prayer, God is pleased to be merciful unto us, and forgive us our sins. And it is well for our spiritual needs, “to be reminded that we are sinners, compelled to make petition for our offences; so that, in claiming God’s indulgence, the mind is recalled to the recollection of its guilt.” And whilst this remembrance brings us to the dust, as those “who have sinned and come short of the glory of God,”—whilst conscience in its review of long past years marshals forth, in stern array, vows forgotten, resolutions abandoned, thoughts unholy, words light and sinful, actions foul and sensual,—whilst conviction cries aloud unto the heart, “unclean, unclean,”—it is as though the wings of God’s mysterious spirit were hovering over and shrouding the drooping soul, when it remembers that it is written, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” There is encouragement to the diffident heart, when it calls to mind the welcome given to the returning prodigal; there is comfort to the humble heart, when it turns to the accepted prayer of the lowly publican; and there is both joy and privilege to the believing heart, when it dwells upon the record of God’s pardoning love; when it knows, that the Son of man “gave Himself a ransom for all,”—that “He hath redeemed us to God by His blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,”—and that “He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,”—and that “He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

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Cyp. Tr. vii.
15.

Cyp. ut sup.

Rom. iii. 23.

Matt. xi. 28.

1 Tim. ii. 6.

Rev. v. 9.

Ib. i. 5.

Titus ii. 14.

Promises like these become to the Christian’s soul a vision of blessedness indeed! They are present to his eye, even as though they were God’s spiritual rainbow,—His pledge to the faithful, that sin shall not be an overwhelming deluge.

But precious as is the assurance from these, and other promises on the part of God, that His mercy and pardon will be extended to all who truly repent, and stedfastly believe His holy Gospel; and strong as may be the confidence, that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,—the Christian

LECTURE will not forget, that "He has added the rule besides, binding
XLVIII. us under the fixed condition and responsibility, that we are
 to ask for our sins to be forgiven, in such sort as we forgive
 them that are in debt to us; knowing that our entreaties for
 sin will have no acceptance, unless we deal towards our
 debtors in a like manner." Upon no one point does Christ
 seem to have been so urgent, as upon that of the cultivation
 of a spirit of forgiveness. And it was a needful lesson, both
 for Gentile and for Jew; for the one had even deified revenge,
 and the other deemed himself permitted at least to hate his
 enemies, if he practised the easy virtue of requiting, those who
 loved him, with corresponding affection. It was the only
 commentary which Jesus made upon His prayer. It was
 but newly spoken, when He added, "If ye forgive men their
 trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if
 ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father
 forgive your trespasses." And again, in the same discourse,
 "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you
 again." Nothing, then, can be clearer than the mind of
 Christ, with reference to His disciple's duty on this score:
 he is to be merciful, that he may obtain mercy; to forgive, to
 love, to soften, and to pray for his enemies; to requite hatred
 with gentleness, oppression with meekness, cursing with
 blessing, evil with good. And he must do this, as knowing
 that God will not accept the sacrifice of the unreconciled
 and bitter-minded. It is a fearful thing for the professed dis-
 ciple to remember, that he invokes God's curse upon his
 head, and not His pardon, if ever he dares to use this prayer
 whilst others sue in vain to him for mercy. It is as though
 he said, "I cannot forgive my brethren,—I pray Thee, there-
 fore, Lord, that Thou wouldest not forgive me; I cannot
 overlook their offences, do not Thou therefore overlook mine;
 I desire to avenge me of mine adversary, do Thou then,
 Lord, pour out the vials of Thy wrath upon me!" This is
 the awful tenour of these words, when they issue from the
 lips of the relentless and unforgiving.

Alas! if God had felt towards us as we too often feel to-
 wards our fellows, where would have been that mysterious
 and stupendous scheme of man's redemption, which reposed,
 from eternity, in the stillness of the Father's counsels, and

Cyp. Tr. vii.
16.

Matt. v.
43—46.

Ib. vi. 14, 15.

Ib. vii. 2.

was developed in the sacrifice offered up by His Son upon the cross? No angel lips would have proclaimed, "on earth peace, good will towards men;" no God of love would have veiled His glory for a season, in the vileness of our mortal flesh; no conflict with the powers of darkness, in the garden of Gethsemane, would have evidenced the suffering Saviour's willingness and power, to repurchase from the prince of darkness the forfeit soul of man: those words of unutterable love, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," would never have been breathed forth from the lips of the expiring Jesus. But that awful sentence, pronounced of old against Jehovah's rebellious and impenitent people, would have been passed upon the world as well,—“Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.”

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Luke ii. 14.

See Lect.
xix. p. 217.Luke xxiii.
34.

Hos. iv. 17.

Is then the Christian tempted, but for a moment, to forget who has declared, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay?”—does he feel it hard to keep down the workings of the old Adam within him, and to forgive his fellows for the injuries they have done him? let him remember the Redeemer's own definition of the extent of Christian love,—“love one another, as I have loved you;” let him take counsel from the Redeemer's solemn warning, that we pray for forgiveness, only as we forgive others; let him abide by the Apostle's affectionate exhortation, “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.”

Rom. xii. 19.

John xv. 12.

Eph. iv.
31, 32.

And let us not suppose, that any zeal for God's honour, any exertions in His service in other respects, can do away with the necessity of obedience on this one point. We are not to choose how far we will receive, and where we are determined to reject the word of God: simple, unhesitating, unselecting obedience is our duty, as it is our privilege. In the language of a venerable Father of the Church, “the quarrelsome and disunited, who holds no peace toward brethren, such an one (as the blessed Apostle and Holy Scripture testify) will never, though he were slain for the name of Christ, be able to free himself from the offence of brotherly disunion, seeing that which is written, ‘he who hateth his brother is a

1 Cor. xiii. 3

LECTURE murder, and no murderer cometh unto the kingdom of
 XLVIII. heaven; or hath life with God.' He can never be with Christ,
 1 John iii. who has chosen to follow Judas rather than Christ. How
 15. deep the sin, which not even the baptism of blood can wash
 out! How great the offence, which martyrdom cannot ex-
 Cyp. Tr. vii. piate!"
 16.

In the concluding clause of this prayer, "and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,"—we pray, that it will please God to "save and defend us in all dangers ghostly and bodily; and that He will keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death."

We do not, by thus praying, mean to say, that we are unwilling to abide those trials which God, in His wisdom, and as surely in His mercy, has assigned to every station and degree of life. We know that it is written, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him:" we know that the same holy Apostle tells us, "My Brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." It is impossible for God to deceive us; and as impossible to mistake the tenour of these counsels of His Spirit: they tell us, that by these very temptations our faith is tried, our stability tested, our love proved. They may be sometimes difficult to comprehend in this world, and, perhaps, always hard to bear: still, we cannot, dare not doubt, but that hereafter the disembodied spirits of the faithful will look back with astonishment, upon the exact adaptation of the trial to the circumstance; they will see, in that time of perfect knowledge, how God's honour and their own soul's salvation were intimately connected with each suffering, as it came. Yea, even the ungodly will then remorsefully understand, how the temptations, by which they fell, were permitted to assail them for the wisest purposes; and might, had they not themselves been drawn aside by their own heart's lusts, have become, in their effects, co-operating instruments of sanctification.

We do not, then, in this our prayer forget, that "all things Rom. viii. 28. work together for good to them that love God:" nor will the

true Christian's faith fail him, because it is not given him, LECTURE
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in all cases, to comprehend the nature and reason of his trials.

But, whilst we thus endeavour to feel with Eli, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good," we may implore 1 Sam. iii.
18. Him to remember, that we are but dust and ashes : we may pray, even as did holy Paul, that the thorn in our flesh may 2 Cor. xii.
7, 8. depart from us ; content, like him, if God replies, "My grace is sufficient for thee ;" and resting, like him, in pious confidence, upon the wisdom of the very least of God's arrangements, "wishing, not struggling to be free." And we are not Ib. 9.
Kemble's
Christian
Year. comfortless in the midst of all our trials. It is not only that the Creator knows the weakness of our flesh, and the vigilance of our invisible adversaries, but "God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." And further, "when we thus pray, 1 Cor. x. 13. that we may not enter into temptation, we are cautioned by this prayer of our infirmity and weakness ; lest any presumptuously exalt himself, proudly and arrogantly placing aught to himself, and counting the praise of whether confession or passion to be his own ; whereas the Lord Himself teaches humility, by saying, ' Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation ; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak : ' Matt. xxvi.
41. that while a humble and submissive confession comes first, and all is referred to God, whatever we supplicantly apply for, in the fear and reverence of God, may by His gracious favour be supplied." Cyp. Tr. vii.
17.

After these things, at the conclusion of the prayer, comes a sentence comprising shortly, and collectively, the whole of our petitions and desires ; "Deliver us from evil." How different would be the estimate that the nominal Christian and the true child of God would form of these words ! The one would think himself justified by them, in praying for freedom from those various worldly evils, that ever and anon start up to fret him in his earthly pilgrimage ; and so, his prayer would be offered up mainly, or only, for deliverance from the evils that may assault the body ;—not knowing, or not heeding, that these are the least amongst the perils, which we are called upon to endure whilst sojourning in the flesh. Thus, he

LECTURE will call earnestly upon God, to rescue him from the several
 { XLVIII. } ills of poverty, affliction, suffering, pain, and from the thousand cares to which our flesh is heir. But the Christian's prayer will be of a different stamp: he will know, that the heaviest earthly troubles are sent by God, as so many means of purification and of holiness; and that it is the sufferer's own fault, if they are not thus appreciated and met. "O Father of mercy," he will pray, "if Thou thinkest fit to 'lead me into temptation,' deliver me from the evil to which I am tempted: deliver me from the evil of sin, and the evil of punishment, from the evil one, from the evil world, and from my own evil heart, and from all suggestions to evil; for all that is evil is most hateful to Thee, (who art infinite goodness,) and most destructive of Thy love. And therefore, from all that is evil, O Almighty Lord, defend me."

Ken's
 Divine
 Love, in
 loc.

And this, the Christian trusts, "He will do of His mercy and goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore he says, Amen, So be it." And we know, in whom we have to trust. We trust in Him, the supreme, the omnipotent, the gracious, and the eternal God. For His is "the kingdom;" the sovereign right to dispose of all things, according to His good will and pleasure: His "the power;" for He is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto Him," through Jesus Christ: and His the "glory;" the glory of creating, redeeming, and sanctifying His creatures, to whom He has given the privilege of knowing, that they, even they, can humbly contribute to His glory: for is it not written, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit?" Nor will the Christian forget, that this kingdom, this power, and this glory of his Maker, are not for that little hour in which mortal things are called to play their part, but—for the endless duration of eternity: for He is God, from everlasting to everlasting, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Heb. vii. 25.

John xv. 8.

Heb. xiii. 8.

How fervently, then, will the true disciple pray, in the words of the devout Bishop Ken, "For the sake, O heavenly Father, of Thy beloved, in whom all 'Thy promises are Amen,' and who is Himself 'the Amen, the faithful and the true Witness' of Thy love to us; hear me, and pardon my wanderings and coldness, and help me to sum up and enforce my

whole prayer, all my own wants, and all the wants of those I pray for, in a hearty, and fervent, and comprehensive AMEN."

LECTURE
XLVIII.
Ken's
Divine
Love,
in loc.

On the Doxology, Bishop Jebb writes thus to a friend,—

"There is every reason to believe, that the Doxology constitutes no proper part, either of the original prayer, or of St. Matthew's Gospel. In the first place, it is omitted by St. Luke ; an omission, in the highest degree improbable, on the supposition that our Lord really delivered this clause, along with the preceding. Of the five most ancient MSS. of St. Matthew, two are defective in that part, which contains the Lord's prayer. In the other three, viz. the Codex Vaticanus, the Codex Bezae, and Barret's newly-discovered MS., the Doxology is wanting ; as it is also in six other MSS. of considerable authority and importance. It is wanting in the Arabic, Persian, Coptic, and Latin versions. It is found in none of the fathers of the first three centuries, though Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen, have written professed expositions of the Lord's prayer. And it is omitted by all the Latin fathers. The most probable account seems to be, that it originated with the Liturgies used in the Byzantine or Constantinopolitan Church, in which doxologies were common ; that thence it found its way into the lectionaries, or collections of portions of Scripture, appointed to be read in the public service ; and that, thence, it was finally introduced into the text of the Byzantine edition of the New Testament itself. Wetstein has remarked, and I think not unfairly, that the conclusion is tautological, and therefore cannot, with propriety, be attributed to our Lord ; it being inconceivable, that, in so very short a composition, He would have repeated the very same ideas that occur in the introduction. To this may I be permitted to add, that I do not see, in the Doxology, any thing like a susceptibility of a similar metrical arrangement, to that which obtains in the prayer itself." Forster's Life, Letter xxx. See also the summary of the arguments on each side, in Elsley's annotations to St. Matthew's Gospel.

The Doxology may evidently be traced to that magnificent prayer of David, "Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty : for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine ; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as Head above all." 1 Chron. xxix. 10, 11.



Part V.

The Christian Sacraments.

Catechist. How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in His Church ?

Answer. Two only, as generally necessary to salvation ; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Q. What meanest thou by this word Sacrament ?

A. I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

Q. How many parts are there in a Sacrament ?

A. Two ; the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace.

Q. What is the outward visible sign, or form, in Baptism ?

A. Water ; wherein the person is baptized, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Q. What is the inward and spiritual grace ?

A. A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness : for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.

Q. What is required of persons to be baptized ?

A. Repentance, whereby they forsake sin ; and Faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.

Q. Why then are Infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them ?

A. Because they promise them both by their sureties ; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.

Q. Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained?

A. For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.

Q. What is the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper?

A. Bread and Wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received.

Q. What is the inward part or thing signified?

A. The Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

Q. What are the benefits, whereof we are partakers thereby?

A. The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine.

Q. What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?

A. To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death; and be in charity with all men.

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GENESIS xvii. 7.

"I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

THE fifth and last part of the Catechism treats of the sacraments, those divinely-instituted ordinances, by which the visible Church of Christ is linked together in ties of holy and mysterious union; "Those signs, and tokens," says Hooker, "of some general promised grace, which always really descendeth from God into the soul that duly receiveth them."

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Eccl. Pol.
b. iv. c. 1.
s. 4.

That this is the restricted sense, in which the Church of England understands and uses the word "sacrament," is evident from her 25th Article; "Sacraments ordained of Christ," she there says, "be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession; but rather, they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us; by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him." The definition given in our Catechism is, in effect, the same.

In earlier times, a more vague meaning seems to have been attached to the word "sacrament;" since we find, that the ancients were accustomed to call "every rite or ceremony, used in the Church, by the name of a sacrament or mystery¹."

Bingham,
b. xii. c. 1.
s. 4.

¹ "St. Austin calls exorcism a sacrament. (Hom. 83, de diversis.) And the salt which was given to catechumens before baptism is called the 'Sacrament of the catechumens,' both by St. Austin (de Peccat. meritis, lib. ii. c. 26.) and the third council of Carthage. (Can. v.) Cyprian speaks of Sacraments in the Lord's prayer. (Tr. vii. 5.) And to insist no longer upon these, it is usual also with the ancients to divide the proper sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist,

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Our own Church, whilst she does not pretend to limit the number of the Sacraments, in the general sense of the word,—or rather, whilst she does not decide what rites or ordinances may, or may not be called sacraments, as binding their recipients in a fresh bond of allegiance to their God,—yet expressly declares, that two only are “sacraments of the Gospel;” two only, “generally necessary to salvation.” Her reason is, because two only were ordained by Christ our Saviour, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord; two only, possessing the external signs which represent, and become the channels of, inward and spiritual grace; two only, endowed with a special promise of that grace. She rejects the five others, commonly called sacraments of the Romish Church, in that they have no “visible sign or ceremony ordained by God:” and though, in some cases, a right use of them may draw down His grace and blessing, Baptism and the Eucharist alone render us “one with Christ, and Christ with us;” alone unite us in federal compact to the Redeemer. And in this view she is supported by the early ecclesiastical writers who treated of the subject. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Augustine, and Chrysostom, all speak of two, and two only, sacraments. “By the one, which is Baptism, we are received and incorporated into the Church of Christ; by the other, which is the Eucharist, or Lord’s Supper, we are nourished and fed unto life everlasting. These are pledges and assurances of remission of sins, and salvation purchased by the death of Christ. These are God’s seals, added unto His most certain promises, for the confirmation of our weak faith; weak, by reason of the infirmity of our flesh.”

The Romish Church, it is well known, not only declares the number of sacraments to be no more nor less than seven, but asserts that they were, one and all, instituted by Christ Himself, and pronounces an anathema upon all who presume to differ from this position. It would be needless to bring forward any elaborate proof of the unsoundness of this assertion. It requires no argument to shew, that Christ did

each of them into two or more, meaning the several parts or rites belonging to them. Thus, Isidore (Origin. vi. c. 19.) speaks of four Sacraments in the Church; which are, baptism, chrism, the body of Christ, and the blood of Christ.” Bingham, b. xii. c. 1. s. 4.

Just. Mart.
Ap. i. c. 66.
Tertull. de
Cor. Mil.
c. 3. adv.
Marc. l. iii.
c. 15. Cyp.
ep. lxxii.
ad Steph.
Cyril.
Catech.
l. xviii.
32, 33.
August. de
Doctr. Chr.
l. iii. c. 9.
Ep. ad
Jan. 118.
al. 54. s. 1.
Chrys. in
Joan.
Hom. 85.
s. 3.
De Sacerd.
lib. 3. s. 5.
Archb.
Sandys’
Serm. on
1 Tim. ii.
1, 2. s. 20.

Concil.
Trid. Sess.
vii. can. 1.

not institute confirmation, penance, extreme unction, matrimony, and orders². To none of these will the close definition in the Catechism apply; nor has the septenary number of sacraments the voice of antiquity in its favour. "It is never," says Archbishop Bramhall, "so much as mentioned in any Scripture, or council, or creed, or father, or ancient author. First devised by Peter Lombard; first decreed by Eugenius IV.; first confirmed in the provincial council of Sens; and after, in the council of Trent." Whilst, then, we reject these ordinances or states as sacraments, we retain them all as offices, substituting Absolution and the Visitation of the Sick for Penance and Extreme Unction.

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Circa
A.D. 1141.
A.D. 1439.
A.D. 1528.
A.D. 1547.
Answ. to
de la Mil.
pt. i. disc. 1.
p. 55,
ed. 1842.
See Hey's
Lect. iv.
Art. 25. 3.

After our Church has thus declared, that she acknowledges but two ordinances as sacraments, in the proper or more restricted sense of the word, she next declares, that these are "generally necessary to salvation;" meaning by that expression, that they are not to be confined to persons of a particular order, or suited only to particular circumstances, as is the case with some of the Romish sacraments; but that they are necessary for persons of all kinds,—binding equally upon all Christians; that, without them, we can have no covenanted title to salvation,—nay, more,—that, without them, we cannot be saved, wherever there is the capacity, and opportunity to receive them; wherever, in other words, God has not Himself placed an insuperable bar to our availing ourselves of these means of grace. Our Church speaks decidedly upon this point,—as being persuaded, that the fulness of that grace, which maketh wise unto salvation, can only, in the ordinary sense of the word, be sacramentally sought; and is, in the usual mode of God's dealing with His creatures, only sacramentally given. We may, if we please, invent other methods of entering into communion with God; but upon our own heads must rest the responsibility of presuming to decide for ourselves, in matters where His own decision is so plain and simple,—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” —“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.”

Mark xvi.
16.

John vi. 53.

² See this subject ably, yet concisely handled by Archbishops Secker and Wake, in their Expositions.

LECTURE
XLIX.Secker, in
loc.

In the succeeding paragraph, wherein the Church gives her definition of the word sacrament, she lays down certain properties which are necessary to its existence. First, that it be “an outward and visible sign,” or a “solemn application of some bodily and sensible thing, or action, to a meaning and purpose which, in its own nature, it hath not;” and which, secondly, denotes “an inward and spiritual grace given to us;” that is, “some favour freely bestowed upon us from heaven, by which our inward and spiritual condition, the state of our souls, is made better.” And further, our Church declares, that it must be “ordained by Christ Himself;” thus making the distinction between that which is of permission, and that which is by commandment: investing it, at once, with a divine authority; rendering it not of temporary, but of eternal obligation: not confining it to any peculiar class of men, nor adapting it to any especial emergency,—but making it both the heritage, and the duty of every Christian soul alike.

Nor are the sacraments of Christ merely signs of grace, they are also a means of it: nay, they are the only appointed channels, through which God has been pleased to convey to us, as of covenant, the fulness of His spiritual blessings. They are the instruments, whereby He ushers us into the possession of all the privileges belonging to, and flowing from the Gospel of Christ. “Sacraments, ordained of Christ, be not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God’s good will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in Him.”

Art. xxv.

Not that the bare partaking of a sacrament necessarily confers on the recipient God’s unfailing grace; there are pre-requisites in each case, without which the sacrament itself is rendered utterly invalid: and first, of Baptism.

Baptism must be received rightly, before, “as by an instrument,” the child of wrath can be made the child of God, and be truly grafted into the Church of Christ. And this right reception consists, first, of the due performance on the part of the agent; and, secondly, of a fitting frame of mind on the part of the recipient. To the due performance of the

rite, two things are necessary : namely, first, that the instrument used be water ; and, secondly, that it be done in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Upon these points all Christendom has, from the earliest ages, been agreed.

A third requisite, namely, a lawful call on the part of the baptizer, opens the door to a wider and a debateable field of enquiry. It would seem rational to suppose, that, as Christ Himself made no distinction between His two sacraments, it cannot be within the power or privilege of man, to set one above the other. But it is practically a lowering of Baptism to hold, that any one, whether priest or layman, believer or infidel, churchman or schismatic, can be equally the means of conferring the grace that accompanies this sacrament ; whilst the universal orthodox belief of Christendom has been, that the celebration of the other should be confined exclusively to those, who have been set apart for the holy office of the ministry. The stoutest advocate for the validity of lay baptism would, it is hoped, be loth to receive the sacramental emblems of the body and blood of Christ, at the hands of any other than of one who, in his estimation, was a lawfully ordained priest of God. The Israelite at least would not lightly have regarded that rite of circumcision, by which he was taken into covenant with God, and which, in its spiritual and mystical meaning, was to him much the same, as baptism is to us.

If we are to discard all logical subtleties and legal arguments, and to take up the common sense view of the matter, it would seem, that, (inasmuch as the administration of the sacraments ordained of Christ must be a more important duty, and a far higher privilege than the administration of any rite ordained of men,)—if a layman can rightly baptize, —much more can he rightly confirm the baptized, consecrate churches, license ministers, or exercise any other episcopal function. Much has been said and written, in these days, respecting the validity of lay and heretical baptism ; and it is argued that, because the Church of England in times past (that is, from the days of Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury, to those of Bancroft, in the reign of James I.,) had sanctioned the practice in some cases, she, therefore, recog-

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See Hook's
Ch. Dict.
art. Lay
Baptism.

nizes the lawfulness and efficacy of the act in all. This would be too hasty a conclusion. It must be remembered, that no baptisms were performed by laymen, except by such as were specially authorized, and licensed for the purpose, by the bishop of the diocese. And further, such baptisms were performed only in extreme cases.

See Rubric
to Office for
Private
Baptism.

The Church, however, has herself set the question at rest, by allowing none but lawful ministers to baptize, even in these extreme cases: for, if her Rubrics are to be taken as the guide and authority of her servants, it would seem, that she recognizes no baptism as effectual which is not performed by a lawful minister³. But the law of the land has decided otherwise: and so, however strongly an individual clergyman may retain his own opinion upon the invalidity of lay and heretical baptism, however conscientiously he may agree with the pious Bishop Wilson, that "those only, who can exclude from the sacraments, can administer them," he must feel himself compelled, in his official acts, to bow to the sentence of the law, as long as it is the law. We may pray for a better state of things.

Maxims of
Piety.

The true member of the Church of England will not, cannot doubt, that, in baptism, he is made "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." It is the privilege of Christ's lawfully-ordained minister, to be the honoured instrument of conferring these benefits upon the faithful children of the Redeemer's Church. Can he, then, suppose it to be at the same time within the power of a layman, a heretic, a schismatic, to invest him with such awful and such soul-stirring titles?

Can those who break the unity of Christ's Church, and

³ "Our Church, by prohibiting all from intermeddling in baptism but a *lawful* minister, plainly hints, that, when baptism is administered by any others, it conveys no benefit or advantage to the child, but only brings upon those who pretend to administer it the guilt of usurping a sacred office; and, consequently, that persons so pretendedly baptized (if they live to be sensible of their state and condition) are to apply to their lawful minister or bishop for that holy sacrament, of which they only received a profanation before." Wheatley on the Com. Prayer, Appendix to c. vii. s. 2. See also the answer of the bishops to the exceptions of the ministers, at the Savoy Conference. Cardwell's Conferences, p. 356, and Jeremy Taylor on Min. Of. s. 1. § 7—11. Heber's ed. vol. xiv. p. 420, and Collier's Eccl. Hist. vol. vi. p. 560, ed. 1840.

foment divisions, by becoming separatists from her communion, be supposed at all to have these titles, receiving, as they do, what they call baptism, at the hands of men who, whatever may be their own opinions upon the lawfulness of their orders, are, if we are to be guided by Scriptural rules, no more ordained priests of the Christian Church, than Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were priests of the Jewish Church?

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The very simplicity of the means, by which God proposes to accomplish such stupendous ends as, from the earliest period of the Church, have been attributed to baptism, has been a stumbling-block to many, who will continue to doubt, where God's arrangements go beyond their comprehension; forgetting that it is written, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

John iii. 8.

"What?" it is urged, "and are we to believe, that the right reception of baptism can impart to us a new nature, usher us into new prospects, convey forgiveness of sins, bestow the gift of God's inworking Spirit?" The kind and degree of grace imparted at baptism, which has already been incidentally noticed, will form the subject of the succeeding lecture; and, therefore, it may be sufficient here to say, that in many instances God has chosen humble, most humble instruments, to work out most important results. It was the east wind, which was His commissioned minister to part the waters of the Red Sea, on the right hand and on the left, so that the rescued hosts of Israel might pass over dry-shod. It was the trumpet-blast of the Jewish priesthood, before which the walls of Jericho fell prostrate: the little stone from out the brook laid low the vain-glorious and gigantic Philistine: and the waters of the humble river Jordan were made efficacious, for the washing away of the leprosy of Naaman: and thus, a spiritual deliverance, a holy victory, an inward cleansing are, one and all, effected by the life-giving waters of baptism; the means of grace, whereby we receive the inestimable gift, of a portion of God's own regenerating Spirit⁴.

See Lectures
ii. and ix.

Exod. xiv.
21.

Josh. vi. 20.

1 Sam. xvii.
49.

2 Kings v.
14.

⁴ "Calling the sacraments, 'means of grace,' doth not signify them to be means by which we merit grace; for nothing but the sufferings of our blessed

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But further, it is essential to the constitution of a sacrament, that it be not only a sign of God's grace, not only a means whereby that grace is imparted to our souls, but,—something more,—“a pledge to assure us thereof;”—a pledge, that is, that we do, by the sacrament, really and truly receive it.

God, in His different dealings with His creatures, has, in compassion to their weakness and want of faith, more than once given certain substantial pledges of the reality of His remembrance, and His love. Thus, after the flood, the bow in the cloud was, and is, an abiding pledge, that God hath not forgotten to be gracious. So, too, with the Jew: wherever his steps were turned,—at all times, and in all places,—he bore with him, in the circumcision of his flesh, a constant mark of his being one of that privileged body, to whom peculiar promises were given, with whom a peculiar covenant was made; it was a sign of favours past,—a pledge of mercies yet to come. So, also, is it with the Christian: he likewise has his pledges given him by God; that, if there should be times when a weak faith might be partially forgetful of its heavenly Parent's promises, it might be strengthened by the remembrance, that it has these very pledges to fall back upon. These sacramental pledges are, in baptism, the water; in the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine. The former, aptly with its spiritual signification, leaving no abiding mark upon the body, but passing away from the eye, when it has done its part in having been made the instrument of our new birth. The latter, at each fresh communion, reassuring us of God's acceptance of “our bounden duty and service;” and becoming a tangible pledge, that thus Christ is indeed in us, and we in Him.

The definition, then, of the Catechism implies that, which it afterwards more distinctly expresses, viz. that there are two component parts in every sacrament; the outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace. Of baptism, as we have seen, this sign is “water,” in obedience to the institution of Christ,—in conformity with the well-known universal practice of the Apostles, and as universal usage of

Saviour can do that for us: but means, by which what He hath merited is conveyed to us.” Secker, in loc. See also Hooker's Eccl. Pol. v. 57. s. 4.

the primitive Church. The inward and spiritual grace is “a LECTURE
death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; for being ^{XLIX.}
by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are here-
by made the children of grace.”

This is that birth from above, of which St. John speaks :
that new birth which, in the language of Scripture, of Ca-
tholic antiquity, of the Liturgies of every ancient Church,
and of the formularies of our own, is called “Regenera-
tion.”

LECTURE L.

JOHN iii. 5.

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

LECTURE ^{L.} “BAPTISM,” says the judicious Hooker, “is a sacrament which God has instituted in His Church, to the end that they which receive the same might thereby be incorporated into Christ, and so, through His most precious merit, obtain as well that saving grace of imputation, which taketh away all former guiltiness, as also that infused divine virtue of the Holy Ghost, which giveth to the powers of the soul their first disposition towards the future newness of life.”

Hooker's
Eccel. Pol. v.
c. 60. s. 2.
See also,
Jer. Taylor,
Life of
Christ, p. 1.
s. 9. § 2.

This view of the blessings resulting from Christian baptism, as adopted by the Church of England, and thus put forth by one of her most gifted children, is most consonant with the letter and spirit of Scripture, is in express accordance with the recorded belief of the primitive Church, and in direct conformity with the general faith of Christendom for fifteen hundred years. But as some within the fold of our holy Church, nay, even some of her ordained ministers, have contended that she really regards baptism in a far lower light, we must prove, by reference to her formularies, that she does teach this view of doctrine,—does command her clergy to inculcate it,—does exhort her laity to receive it,—and does presuppose, that all, professedly belonging to her communion, believe it.

Refer to the
Office for
Public
Baptism.

When a child of Christian parents is brought to baptism in the Church of England, the prayers of the congregation are first asked in behalf of the little one, thus solemnly about to be dedicated to the service of his Redeemer. The supplications of the Church are added, that God will mercifully look

upon the child ; that He will “ wash him, and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost ; that he, being delivered from God’s wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ’s Church ; and being stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally he may come to the land of everlasting life.” She prays, withal, that the child, thus “ coming to holy baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration :”—nay, she puts forth God’s command, that little ones should be thus brought to Him ; she pleads God’s promise given by His beloved Son ; and humbly, though confidently, declares, that it is written, “ Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.” Does she doubt God’s merciful designs towards each individual, or does she suffer baptismal privileges to rest upon the quality of the sponsors, the Christian feelings of the parents, or on the penitence and faith of both ? Nay, though she requires repentance and faith to be pledged, on behalf of each little lamb thus brought within the fold of Christ, she believes, that God, in all cases, will accept the pledges, and says, “ Doubt ye not, but earnestly believe, that He will favourably receive” each coming infant ; “ that He will embrace him with the arms of His mercy, that He will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of His everlasting kingdom.” And when the solemn dedication of the infant to his Maker’s service is accomplished ; when the awful symbol of the Christian’s faith has been imprinted on his brow, “ in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ’s faithful soldier and servant unto his life’s end,”—it is then that the Church’s thanksgivings are offered up, for the benefits thus newly conferred ; thanksgivings, that it hath pleased God, “ to regenerate the infant with His Holy Spirit, to receive him for His own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into His holy Church.”

Matt. vii. 7.

No language on the part of the Church can be more decidedly expressive of her belief, that “ as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,” that by baptism we are “ born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible.”

Gal. iii. 27.

1 Pet. i. 23.

LECTURE L. It must not be forgotten that, careful as the Church is, to put forth the doctrine of baptismal regeneration,—as heedful is she, to state the grounds upon which the necessity of a new birth, at the earliest period of existence, is founded.

See also,
Offices for
Adult Bap-
tism, and for
Confirma-
tion, Arti-
cles 9. 15.
16. 27. and
Collect for
Christmas
day.

She reminds her children, that they are born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, “None can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate, and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost.” And the whole baptismal service either implies, or expresses her belief, that we can only be thus born of water and of the Spirit by baptism, the laver of regeneration; warning us the while, that we can retain the privilege of this new membership, only so long as we endeavour ourselves faithfully to observe such duties, as we, by our own confession, have assented unto.

Explicit, then, as the Church of England is upon this point, and tenacious as she is of its retention, it remains to ascertain her reasons for teaching, that it is only by baptism that we become, in the proper sense of the word, regenerate. Nor is this a needless enquiry: for, to say nothing of the interest attached to it in a personal point of view, it is notorious, as has been before hinted, that in our own time there are found many, who will reiterate the objections of the puritans and nonconformists of the days of the second Charles; and who will declare with them, “we cannot in faith say that every child that is baptized is regenerate.” It might be sufficient to answer, with the bishops who conducted the Savoy conference on the part of the Church, “Seeing that God’s sacraments have their effects, where the receiver doth not ‘*ponere obicem*,’ put any bar against them (which children cannot do); we may say in faith of every child that is baptized, that it is regenerated by God’s Holy Spirit.”

See Caril-
well’s Con-
ferences,
p. 356.

But it may be well to ascertain, that the framers of our Liturgy put forth no new doctrine in thus asserting baptismal regeneration; but one, in strict accordance with the fair interpretation of Scripture, and with the known belief of Catholic antiquity.

The first Scriptural proof to which our Church points, is the memorable declaration of our blessed Lord to Nicodemus; “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of *water* and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom

of God." Now the objector to baptismal regeneration declares, that this expression of our Saviour does not refer to the ordinance of baptism, but exclusively to that inward cleansing of the heart, which may, or may not take place at some after period; but which a man must experimentally feel, before he can be a Christian in the proper sense of the word. In other language, they affirm that the Church of England is radically wrong, in supposing the necessity and reality of baptismal regeneration to be proved from this passage of Scripture¹. But if our Saviour's words have any meaning, "if spiritual regeneration be not conferred by baptism,—when (we may reasonably demand), and by what means is it conferred? In what other ceremony, and at what other season, shall we find that joint operation of water and of the Holy Spirit, of which Christ affirms we must be born? I say that joint operation; for surely those, which Christ Himself hath joined together, it is not for man to put asunder."

L.
Mant's
Bampt.
Lect. vi.
p. 351, 352.

The impugnors of the belief of the Church of England, when they assert baptismal regeneration to be "the Diana of the present clergy, and of the present age," seem to forget that they, not we, put forth a novel doctrine; they, not we, abandon the old paths; they, not we, affix an interpretation to this passage, unknown and unheard of until a comparatively late period: one utterly foreign to the belief, and, may we not add, to the knowledge of the early Fathers of the primitive Church; who, whatever may be the difference of opinion as to their doctrinal soundness, are at least competent witnesses as to what was, or what was not the received standard of orthodoxy of their own days. "They know," says Hooker, speaking of the cavillers to whom we have alluded, "that of all the ancients there is not one to be named, that ever did otherwise either expound or allege the place, than as implying external baptism."

Whitefield,
quoted in
Mant, as
above,
p. 348.

Ecc. Pol.
b. v. s. 59

¹ Wesley, "who uniformly gloried in his fidelity to the doctrines of the Church of England, declares that 'baptismal regeneration might, with all our best endeavours, be ineffectual;' and Whitefield said, that 'he would as soon believe the doctrine of transubstantiation, as that all people, who are baptized, are born again.'" Mant's Bampt. Lect. vi. p. 348. Calvin was the first, who disputed the universally received interpretation of this passage of St. John. Instit. l. iv. c. xvi. s. 25.

LECTURE L. The earliest testimony on the subject is, as is well known, that of Justin Martyr, who wrote within forty years after the death of St. John. Although few passages have been more frequently quoted, no apology need be offered for inserting it in a treatise of this nature. "Whoever," he says, "are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to live accordingly, are taught, with prayer and fasting, to beg of God the remission of their sins; we also praying and fasting with them. Then they are led by us to a place where there is water, and after the manner of new birth, whereby we also were new born, are they new born. For they are bathed in the water, in the name of God the Father, and Lord of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost; for Christ said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven'.²"

Apol. i.
c. 61.

Tert. de
Bapt. c. 13.
Basil de
Spi. Sanct.
c. 12.
August. de
Peccat.
Merit. et
Remiss. i.
s. 26. al. 20.
Art. xxvii.
August.
Enchirid.
xiii. See
also, Orig.
in Luc. 2.
Hom. 14.
Chrys. in
Gen. Hom.
40. s. 4.
in Rom.
Hom. 11.
Hom. in
Gal. iv. 28.
in Joh. iii.
3—5.
August.
contr. Jul.
Pel. l. vi.
c. iii. al. 7.
Ib. l. iii.
c. iii. al. 8.
Cyp. Ep.
lxxxv.

Tertullian, Basil, Augustine, all give the same interpretation; and passages without number might be adduced, from the writers of ecclesiastical antiquity, uniformly asserting, that "baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened; but it is also a sign of regeneration, or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted in the Church: the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." And thus is borne out the energetic language of St. Augustine, that "they who partake of the sacrament of baptism die unto sin, as Christ also died unto sin, that is, unto the flesh, the image of sin; and live, by being born again of the laver, as He by rising from the grave³."

² It is true, that Justin is here speaking mainly of adult baptism; but it must not be forgotten, that, as it is indisputable that children were baptized in those days, and since no allusion is made to their baptismal blessings being of an inferior kind or degree, we may reasonably conclude that the remarks of Justin will equally apply to them.

³ "It has been well proved, at large, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that both the Greek and Latin fathers not only used the word "regeneration" for baptism, but so appropriated it also to baptism, as to exclude any other conversion or repentance, not considered with baptism, from being signified by that name; so that, according to the ancients, regeneration, or new birth was either baptism

But the doctrine of baptismal regeneration need not depend exclusively upon this single text; however safely, to the mind of the humble and uncavilling student, it might be suffered there to rest. There are many passages in the New Testament, that speak precisely the same language, and prove to us, that baptism is something more than mere admission into the visible Church of Christ. LECTURE
L.

At the first preaching of the Gospel by the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, when remorse, conviction, and spiritual longings were agitating, by turns, the hearts of his astonished hearers, what was the Apostle's answer to the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" he replied, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Thus explicitly did the Apostle declare, that baptism was the appointed instrument of conveying to man forgiveness for the past, and grace for the time to come:—it was a comment upon our Saviour's remark to Nicodemus. So too, when the repentant, converted Saul was to be brought within the pale of that Church which he had persecuted to the death, he was bidden thus by God's appointed minister; "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Nay, with reference to another convert, so great was the necessity of baptism to complete the work that the Holy Ghost had begun, by conferring regeneration where conversion had previously existed, that the first Gentile convert, Cornelius, was baptized, although it had been previously given to him to exercise the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost. Acts ii.
37, 38.

Acts xxii.
16.

Acts x.
44—48.

Again, in that memorable passage in his Epistle to the Corinthian Church, in which the Apostle Paul reminds them of that spiritual darkness and sinful condition, from which he had been the honoured means of rescuing them; "such were some of you," is his appeal, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." "Where," observes Bishop Mant, "as the Lord Jesus is mentioned as the meritorious 1 Cor. vi.
11.

itself (including both sign and thing); or a change of man's spiritual state, considered as wrought by the *Spirit* in or through baptism." Waterland on Regeneration.

LECTURE cause of sanctification and justification, and the Spirit of our

L.
Mant's
Bapt.
Lect. vi.
359.

God as the efficient and operating cause ; so also is the washing of baptism mentioned as the instrument by which those blessings are conveyed." In like manner, in his Epistle to

Titus, salvation, justification, and spiritual heirship are represented, as being not only connected with, but resulting from "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the

Tit.iii.4—7. Holy Ghost." In the Epistles to the Colossians and to the Romans, St. Paul uses the same figure of speech ; representing baptism as a kind of spiritual burial, and, at the same time, a spiritual quickening : "Buried with Him in baptism," is his language to the Colossians, "wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." "Therefore," he says to the

Col. ii. 12,
13.

Romans, "we are buried with Him by baptism into death ; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." "As His body," is St. Chrysostom's commentary upon this passage, "by being buried in the earth, brought forth as the fruit of it the salvation of the world, thus our's also, being buried in baptism, bore as fruit righteousness, sanctification, adoption, countless blessings."

Rom. vi.
4, 5.

LECTURE LI.

JOHN iii. 5.

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

WE have seen already, that the Fathers of the primitive Church were unanimous in interpreting the memorable passage of St. John, above quoted, as referring to baptismal privileges: and that they were content to receive as true, that which had been handed down from Apostolic ages, namely, that, before a man can plead a covenanted title to the blessings which Christ died to purchase for the world, he must be born of water, as well as of the Spirit; and that the laver of regeneration is the only appointed means whereby he can be so born. Such also was the belief of the Reformers of our Church. In those days there was no endeavour to explain away baptismal privileges, because their faith was too weak, or their docility too slender to receive, without demur, baptismal mysteries.

“It is very necessary,” says Archbishop Cranmer, “for us to know, how we must be born again, and what this second birth is, without the which we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But when we speak of a second birth, you shall not so grossly understand this saying, as though a man which is once born should enter again into his mother’s womb, and so be born again as he was before. (For it were great foolishness so to think.) But here we mean of a second birth which is spiritual, whereby our inward man and mind is renewed by the Holy Ghost; so that our hearts and minds receive new desires, which they had not at their first birth or nativity.

“And the second birth is by the water of baptism, which

LECTURE ^{LI.} Paul calleth the bath of regeneration, because our sins be forgiven us in baptism, and the Holy Ghost is poured into us, as into God's beloved children, so that by the power and working of the Holy Ghost we be born again spiritually, and made new creatures. And so by baptism we enter into the kingdom of God, and shall be saved for ever, if we continue to our lives' end in the faith of Christ."

Cranmer's
Catechism,
on Baptism.

"What," it is asked in King Edward's Catechism, "doth baptism represent and set before our eyes?" The answer is, "that we are by the Spirit of Christ new born, and cleansed from sin; that we be members and parts of His Church, received into the communion of saints. For water signifieth the Spirit."

Edv. Catech.
Art. Baptis.

Multitudes of passages of a similar description might be quoted from the Homilies, and other writings of that period; and the testimony of their venerable authors to a great Catholic truth is the more valuable, in that they did not blindly follow in the track of those who had gone before them, but calmly and dispassionately weighed each doctrine before it was propounded, and uniformly deferred to the voice of primitive antiquity. Is the well-matured judgment of such men to go for nothing? Who are we, despite of such evidence to the spiritualizing effects of baptism rightly administered, to lower the ordinance, and to rob it of its sacramental dignity, by denying the presence of the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, absolutely in the case of infants, and conditionally in the case of adults? It is melancholy enough to see the laity idly foregoing, and wantonly casting aside their baptismal privileges: but, with regard to the ordained priest of the Church of England, who has promised, in the sight of God, to give his faithful diligence "always so to minister the doctrine and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and realm hath received the same,"—it is a deeper feeling than that of mere sorrow with which we must regard a man, thus solemnly and voluntarily pledged to abide by the Church's teaching, endeavouring to explain away her formularies, or, in some cases, to gainsay and to curtail them, instead of reverently receiving them, as founded upon most certain warrant of Holy Writ. It is with pain, akin to awe, that we behold

See Mant's
Bampt.
Lect. vi.
p. 352—355.

See Preface
to the Com.
Prayer.

Office for
Ordering of
Priests.

such a man setting at nought the judgment of the immediate successors and disciples of the Apostles, of Fathers, of Councils, of Catholic antiquity, of the most learned divines of his own Church,—and for what? that he may follow in the wake of the puritans and nonconformists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; men, many of them, certainly of much piety, but few of deep learning; men, who thought that they could as well, or better, draw truth from the streams muddied by the prejudices and superstitions of fifteen centuries' accumulation, than from the Apostolic fountain-head.

The stumbling-block to many, against admitting baptismal regeneration, is the presumed difficulty of unconscious infants being able to receive a blessing at the hands of the Almighty. There was no such difficulty felt upon the divine establishment of the Jewish polity, when circumcision was instituted as the mode of admitting the infants of God's chosen people into covenant with Him. There was no such difficulty on the part of Christ, when He took up little children in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them. There were certainly doubts and difficulties on the part of Naaman, how his leprosy was to be cleansed, and his bodily defilement washed away by the humble waters of the Jewish river. Nicodemus could not understand the Saviour when He told him, that the old Jewish rite of baptism was hereafter to be invested with a new grace, a more extensive efficacy; “to signify greater mysteries, to convey greater blessings, to cleanse deeper than the skin, and to carry proselytes farther than the gate of the institution.”

Jer. Taylor's Life of Christ, pt. i. s. 9. Dis. vi. pt. i. § 11. See Lect. ii. p. 18, 19.

But the primitive Church,—nay, the Christian world,—for fifteen centuries felt no such difficulties. Why then should the modern Christian take a lower ground, and revert to the misgivings of the benighted Syrian, or the doubting Jew? Every dispensation of God,—the least communication of His grace,—the smallest exercise of His bounty, is all mystery;—but it is not too curiously to be enquired into, and certainly not hastily to be rejected, because imperfectly understood. If we are tempted to ask, how are the benefits and blessings of spiritual regeneration conferred upon infants in their tender years? let us be satisfied with the fact, without endeavouring to investigate too narrowly the cause. In the language of

LECTURE one, whose theological learning was only exceeded by his
 LI. humility, we need but state, "that in this, as in various other instances, it hath pleased Almighty God to set limits to the presumptuousness of human curiosity; and thus at once to try our humility, and our faith. It is enough for us to rest assured, that God is now, and ever, the same all-good and gracious Parent; that, as in times past, it was 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He perfected praise;' and as 'He revealed unto babes those things which were hidden from the wise and prudent,' so He is, at all times, abundantly able to pour forth the dew of His blessing upon infants who are faithfully brought to the baptism of His Son."

Bp. Jebb's
 Pract. Theol.
 Disc. v.
 p. 83.

See W. D.
 Conybeare's
 Bamp. Lect.
 viii. p. 486.

Since, then, the common-sense interpretation of Holy Writ is so obvious, and the voice of Catholic antiquity so explicit, that baptismal regeneration must be acknowledged by all, who will not wilfully shut their eyes against the clear evidence of Scripture,—whence is it, that so many do shut their eyes against that evidence, and persist in condemning the Church of England as heterodox, because she teaches the doctrine? It is chiefly because her opponents confound regeneration with conversion: it is because they use the word "regeneration" in a sense never contemplated, and never employed, in earlier days. It is because they forget, that terms of similar import with regeneration, such as "new birth," "new creature," "born again," and "created anew," are almost invariably employed to distinguish the state of a person admitted into the Christian covenant, from that of one not so admitted. "Regeneration," says Bishop Van Mildert, "in the Scriptural usage of it, means only our initiation, or entrance, by baptism, into that covenant, which gives us new privileges, new hopes, and a new principle of spiritual life; placing us in a totally different state from that, to which by nature only we could ever attain. The expression therefore cannot, without a direct violation of the verbal analogy of Scripture, be applied to any operation that takes place subsequent to that baptismal change, with which alone it perfectly corresponds."

Van Mil-
 dert's Bamp.
 Lect. vi.
 p. 162.

If the Church of England, following both the analogy of Scripture, and the common consent of Catholic antiquity, uses the word regeneration in this sense; are others justified

in affixing a new sense to the word, in ascribing novel and unheard-of effects to the act, and then to say, that the Church teaches thus or thus, and to pronounce her heterodox, merely because they take up new opinions themselves, and do not choose to enquire into the real principles upon which she decides and acts? It is convenient for objectors to forget, that, whilst the Church teaches us (as well she may), to thank God, in that, through baptism, we are made His “children by adoption and grace,”—she leads us as well to pray, that we may “daily be renewed by His Holy Spirit.”

LECTURE
LI.
Collect for
Christmas-
day.

We have already noticed the tender caution of our Church in reminding us, that, though regeneration cannot in itself be undone or lost, yet we do not retain the grace or privileges of our Christian baptism, except so far as, in the beautiful language of the office, we are “stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity.” And therefore we may pass to another point of anxious interest, connected with the general question, namely, Infant Baptism.

Lecture ii.
p. 20; ix.
p. 88—91.

“There is no ancient writer,” says Calvin, “who does not unhesitatingly refer its origin to the Apostolic age.” Justin Martyr, who wrote about one hundred and ten years after the death of Christ, speaks of Christians of his own day, of sixty and seventy years of age, who had been made disciples of Christ from infancy. This brings them within the scope of the Apostolic age; and we can scarcely suppose, that, as the word employed was commonly applied to baptism, these persons, who were made disciples from their infancy, were not also baptized in their infancy.

Instit. l. iv.
c. 16. s. 8.

ἐκ παιδων
ἐμαθητεύ-
θησαν.
Apol. i. c. 15.

See Wall on
Inf. Bapt.
pt. i. c. 2.

Irenæus, who, as is well known, was a disciple of Polycarp the pupil of St. John, and about thirty years junior to Justin Martyr,—not only constantly speaks of baptism as our regeneration, but declares, that infants were among those who were regenerated to God. Origen says, that “little children are baptized for the remission of sins;” and gives, at the same time, the reason; “because, by the sacrament of baptism, the filth of our nativity is laid aside:” whilst in another place he says, “if there were nothing in little children that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would seem to be superfluous.”

Adv. Hær.
ii. 39.
Orig. in
Luc.
Hom. xiv.
in Rom. vi.
6.

in Lev.
Hom. viii.
s. 3.

St. Cyprian, when speaking of baptism, tells us, that a

LECTURE council in his day unanimously judged, "that the mercy and
 LI. grace of God should be denied to no one born of men."

Cyp. Ep.
 lxiv. ad Fid.

Cont. Jul.
 Pel. l. iii.
 c. 3.

De Pecc.
 merit. et
 remiss.
 i. 27.

A. D. 416.
 Recentes ab
 uteris
 matrum.
 Conc. Mil.
 ii. c. 2.

A. D. 692.

Conc. Trull.
 can. 84.

Serm. x.
 al. 176. de
 verb. Ap. c. 2.
 Chrys. Hom.
 de Adam
 et Eva.
 Ambros. l. x
 Ep. 84, ad
 Dem. Virg.

Augustine declares, that "by the price of Christ's blood in baptism little children are washed, freed, and saved from original sin, which was propagated from our first parents." And in another place he says decidedly, that "since little children do not begin to be reckoned of His sheep, except through baptism; assuredly, if they receive it not, they will perish, for they will not have that eternal life, which He will give to His sheep."

The second council held at Milevi, pronounced an anathema against those, who denied the propriety of infant baptism at the earliest possible period. And at a later time, in the Trullan council, called under Justinian the second, it was declared, "In strict conformity with the canonical constitutions, we determine also concerning infants, that as often as valid witnesses are not found, who affirm that they were undoubtedly baptized, and when they themselves, by reason of their infancy, are unable to answer satisfactorily respecting the mystery having been delivered to them, without any scandal such ought to be baptized."

Testimonies and declarations like these are sufficiently indicative of the judgment of the ancient Church upon this subject. But there are those, who will not submit to that judgment, nor regard the voice of primitive and Catholic antiquity, as having any weight or authority in deciding the question. In vain may Fathers¹, councils, synods, speak the language of the venerable Augustine. "Let no one whisper to you strange doctrines; this" (alluding to the practice of infant baptism) "the Church hath always held, always retained, this she hath received from the faith of those of old." There are those who will admit of no authority whatever, even in external matters of Church discipline, that is not directly supported by Scripture; forgetting, it would seem, that Scripture no where gives us a regular system of doctrinal or practical teaching, still less one of detailed ecclesiastical discipline.

¹ See, on the testimony of the Fathers to this point, Wall's *Infant Baptism*, more especially pt. i. and pt. ii. c. 10, although selection of one or two passages, in a work where all is masterly, is well-nigh superfluous. Consult also Bishop Kay's *Ecl. Hist.* illustrated from Tertullian, p. 325. 445.

It should be borne in mind also, that the Epistolary writings of the Apostles were evidently addressed to men, already in possession of systems, forms, ordinances, and doctrines, laid down or sanctioned by the holy men themselves. Hence the careful reader will not be surprised to find allusions only, where the superficial observer might perhaps expect detailed instruction.

“It would be a most wretched hold,” says Calvin, “if, for the defence of infant baptism, we were compelled to fly to the bare authority of the Church.” If Scripture does not expressly command the practice, the analogy of Scripture and its indirect expressions at least warrant us in concluding, with our article, “that the baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.”

Instit. l. iv.
c. viii. s. 16.

Art. xxvii.

The typical analogy between circumcision, as the sign and seal of the covenant of works, and baptism, as that of the covenant of grace, is too obvious to need much comment or illustration. “Circumcision, like baptism, was an outward and visible sign, typifying an inward and spiritual grace, namely, the circumcision of the heart; of which surely a babe of eight days old was no more immediately capable, than is the baptized infant of the fulness of the graces to which he is admitted. The parallel appears complete throughout; and the express divine authority in the one case, fully sufficient to imply a similar sanction to the corresponding rite.”

W. D. Co-
nybeare's
Bapt.
Lect. viii.
p. 488.

But it is urged, again and again, that Christ did not command infants to be baptized. True, yet Christ did not only not exclude them, but pronounced them, as we have seen, capable of receiving His own divine blessing; rebuking those that would have kept them from Him,—for of such, He declared, is the kingdom of God.

Mark x.
13—16.

But further, it is well known that, when the Jews baptized their proselytes, they baptized whole households down to the very infant of yesterday; considering all, save the people of God, incapable of entering into the covenant of the children of Abraham, by circumcision, without previous washing, to denote purification from former uncleanness. We know also, that Christ adopted this ancient usage of His countrymen, to which they had been so long accustomed, as the means of

Lightfoot,
Hor. Heb.
in Matt. iii.
John iii.

LECTURE admission into His Church, and invested it, as He told Nicodemus, with a new and spiritual dignity. Had the Saviour desired children to be excluded from Christian baptism, would He not have expressly enjoined departure from this old custom which He had thus taken up? The silence of Christ on this point is conclusive.

Baptism was no new rite to the Christian, as was circumcision to the great progenitor of the Jew. Infant baptism was no unheard-of practice in the days of Christ, as was infant circumcision in the days of Abraham: no especial command therefore to baptize children was required, when the Apostles were commanded to go forth to teach, or rather to make disciples of all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." They would have done so as a matter of course; they had been accustomed to it; it was a national practice; and they would have required rather an express prohibition from Christ, to prevent them from baptizing infants, when we read of their baptizing converts with their whole households and families ².

Acts x. 48.
xvi. 15. 33.
1 Cor. i. 16.
See Tom-
line and
Burnet, in
loc. Jer.
Taylor,
Life of
Christ, pt. i.
s. 9, disc. 6.

And, if an objection be raised against the baptism of infants, on the score of their personal inability to exercise repentance and faith,—it is enough for the docile child of the Church to answer, in the concise language of the Catechism, "They promise them both by their sureties; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform."

Hawkins's
Bampt.
Lect. v.
p. 172.
2nd ed.

Repentance can scarcely be looked for at the hands of one who has committed no actual sin; "and the faith of his parents may be accepted for his own by Him, who forgave

² "As the children of converts to Judaism were always baptized, the order to convert and baptize all nations would, of course, be understood to include children. Suppose the order had been 'Go ye and circumcise all nations;' would not the circumcision of children have been included? If one of our Baptist congregations was to send out a minister, with the commission 'Go and baptize the Indians or Gentoos,' I should think he grossly perverted his commission if he baptized children. But if one was sent from the Church of England with the same commission, 'Go and baptize the Gentoos,' I should think he grossly neglected his commission if he did not baptize children. When a custom was once settled, which the solicitude of parents would strongly impel them to continue, not to check such a custom was, in a manner, to encourage it, and give it a sanction. And such a custom prevailing, it is difficult to conceive that households would be baptized, and the children omitted." Hey's Lectures, iv. xxvii. 27.

the sins of the paralytic for the faith of his friends.” If, by the justice of God, personal guilt can be imputed to children, before they have arrived at an age to know right from wrong, surely we may safely conclude that, by the mercy of God, grace can be imparted, without their understanding the value of the gift,—and forgiveness may be bestowed, before they can have exercised actual righteousness.

If every child requires this grace, before he can do any thing “pleasant and acceptable to God,”—if he needs this forgiveness, before he can safely be said to be in a state of covenanted reconciliation with Him, it were a strange paradox to say, that the remedy provided is not as extensive as the existing disease;—or, that any child is incapable of receiving grace, pardon, and adoption, at the threshold of his existence.

When our little ones are taken from us, do we not believe that their souls are safe, through the merits of their Redeemer, in the presence and under the guardianship of God? Are not those tears, which nature will wring from us upon our bereavement, exchanged for the glow of holy triumph, in being the honoured instruments of ushering into the world a redeemed saint in glory? If such, then, be the Christian parent’s faith with regard to his baptized offspring,—if his greatest comfort is to believe, that, when God demands them at his hands, their spirits are ushered to His glorious presence in heaven;—why should human doubts or scruples prevent him from placing them in the way, of being admitted into the participation of all the blessings and privileges connected with His visible Church on earth?

LECTURE
LI.

Art. x.

LECTURE LII.

1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us : therefore let us keep the feast.”

LECTURE LII. OUR Church, as we have seen in Lect. xlix., only regards as sacraments, in the strict sense of the term, those which were ordained by Christ Himself, viz., Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord. The former we have already noticed. The latter therefore alone remains to be considered.

Secker,
Lect. xxxv.
init.
Lect. 1.

Bengel.
Gnomon,
vol. ii. 477.
Comp. Bosanquet's
Logic, c. xv.

1 Cor. xiii.
9. 12.

Human language is inadequate to the full explanation of this sublime mystery ; and even when treated with the utmost truth and clearness that words can convey, it will still be comparatively obscure and unacceptable to all but devout and holy minds. Assuming, then, that it is not so much by argument of words¹, as by holiness of life, that we can duly apprehend this venerable mystery, and that even at the best we must be content, “now” to “see through a glass darkly,” —to “know but in part,”—we may pass at once to what is perhaps the best mode of setting forth so sacred a subject, viz., the collecting and arranging in order, from the inspired word itself, such passages as may assist the earnest enquirer after divine truth, in arriving at some knowledge of its real nature.

In pursuing this method, it may be well, first, to take an historical survey of the Lord's Supper ; secondly, to consider the nature and benefits of the institution ; and lastly, to point out the preparation required on our parts, in order to the worthy participation thereof.

I. In treating the first branch of our subject we may observe, that the Old Testament is full of types and shadows,

¹ *Capacitas nostri cordis ad sancta mysteria non tam exercitatione intellectus, quam per incrementum hominis novi amplificatur.*—Bengel. ut supra.

the accomplishment and substance of which is revealed in the LECTURE
LII.
 New; so that the ordinances and institutions of the latter cannot well be understood, without reference to those by which they were foreshadowed and prefigured in the former. Let us begin, therefore, by reviewing some of those passages in the Old Testament, by which the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and the institution of the Holy Eucharist, so closely connected with it, were more obviously prefigured.

The first mention that Holy Scripture makes of sacrifices occurs, in Gen. iv. 3, 4, where, after relating "that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord," the sacred historian continues, "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but to Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect." It seems not to have been so much the difference of species, as the difference of spirit in which these respective sacrifices were offered, that rendered the one acceptable, and the other displeasing: Cain offered his fruits without due selection, Abel the best and fattest of his flock². But however this may be, St. Paul gives a reason for the preference of Abel's sacrifice, which seems to intimate its typical connexion with the sacrifice of the death of Christ. "By *faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Faith in whom or what, but in "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," even "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" of whose sacrifice on the cross, with which God was well pleased, the offering of Abel's firstlings was no unmeet prefiguration? The like mystical signification of Abel's sacrifice seems also to be implied, by the same Apostle, in another part of this epistle, where, speaking of the superiority of the New Covenant to

Heb. xi. 4.

Rev. xiii. 8.

John i. 29.

² Josephus (A. i. 2. 1.) considers the sacrifice of Abel to have been preferable, in itself, to that of Cain, inasmuch as the spontaneous produce of nature is more honourable to God, than that which comes of the labour and device of man. Comp. Cyril. Alex. cont. Jul. x. 347, 348. ed. Lutet. 1638. But his words imply nothing at variance with the view maintained in the text, which is supported by Tertull. adv. Jud. 2; Iren. iv. 18. 3; Macarius de Perfect. 17; Ambros. de Incarn. Sac. 1; Chrysost. Hom. 18. in Gen. s. 5; Cyril. ut sup. 349; Leo, de voc. Gent. ii. 13.

LECTURE the old, he says, "but ye are come unto Mount Sion . . .
 LII. and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the
 Heb. xii. blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of
 22-24. Abel :."

Gen. viii. We may pass over the sacrifice of Noah on his coming
 20. forth from the ark, which is next mentioned, and come to a
 Heb. v. 6. very remarkable one, the offerer of which is shewn by St. Paul
 Psal. cx. 4. to have been a type of our Lord Jesus Christ; while the
 Galat. i. x. sacrifice itself was understood by the ancient Hebrews, to
 de arcan. foreshadow that of the Messiah, and is declared by the voice
 Cathol. of Catholic antiquity, to have been typical of the Holy Eucha-
 verit. c. 4, 5, 6. rist. I allude to Melchizedek's bringing forth bread and wine
 Genebrard in Chrono- to Abraham, when returning victorious from the slaughter of
 graph. the five kings. "And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought
 Liturg. S. forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high
 Pet. ex Bib- God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of
 lioth. Pat. t. the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; and
 i. p. 210, &c. blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine
 Clem. Alex. enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all."
 Strom. iv. 25. Although there is here no express mention of Melchizedek's
 Cyp. Ep. 63. offering the bread and wine in sacrifice; yet, when we con-
 Ambros. de sider him as a known type of Christ, and that the mention of
 Sac. iv. 3. his bringing forth bread and wine is immediately connected
 de iis qui ini- with that of his priesthood, of his blessing Abraham, and of
 tiantur, c. 8. his receiving tithes, we can hardly doubt that it was a sacri-
 Epiphani. ficial act. Indeed the context shews, that the bread and wine
 Har. 55. s. 6. was needed for no other purpose, Abraham and his company
 Damascen. being abundantly furnished with provisions in the booty re-
 l. iv. c. 14. captured from the enemy, of which they had already partaken.
 Hieron. Ep. This view of the matter is confirmed by Philo the learned
 17. ad Jew, who may well be supposed to have understood the mean-
 Marcel. 126. ing of his own Scriptures. He says of this act of Melchizedek,
 ad Evag. 23.
 Com. in 24.
 Matt. 26.
 Aug. de Civ. Dei, xvi. 22.
 in Psal. 136.
 xxxiii. ser. 2.
 s. 2. and cix.
 s. 17. ad In-
 nocent. Ep.
 95. al. 177.
 s. 12. Theo-
 doret.
 Quæst.
 in Gen. lxiv.
 Chrysost.
 in loc.
 Isidor. Com.
 in Gen. c. 12.
 Glaph. in
 Gen. l. ii.
 Jul. Firmic.
 de Error.
 Prof. Rel.
 Athanas.
 Orat. de
 Melchized.
 Gen. xiv.
 18-20.

³ Whether we read here *παρὰ τὸ Ἀβὲλ*, with many MSS. of good authority, from which our present authorized version was made, or *παρὰ τὸν Ἀβὲλ*, with Text. Recept. and Griesbach, these words may further imply, that the death of Abel himself (the victim of Cain's envy and malice, as Jesus was of the envy and malice of the Jews,) was a type of the sacrifice of Christ: but with this difference, that, whereas the blood of Abel called for vengeance, that of Christ called for mercy. Prosper Aquit. de Promiss. et Prædict. Dei, i. 6. cum Matt. xxiii. 35; Cyril. apud Œcumen. Com. in Heb. c. 19. p. 426. c.; Chrysost. de don. Abel. and Theophylact, in loc.

“he offered a triumphal sacrifice.” How aptly the type LECTURE
LII.
corresponds with the anti-type in this, as well as in other respects, is too obvious to require further comment ⁵. ἐπινίκια
ἔθυσ.

The next type of the sacrifice of Christ, recorded in the Old Testament, is Abraham's offering his only son Isaac upon Mount Moriah. It is impossible to compare this narrative Gen. xxii. with the history of our blessed Lord's crucifixion, and not be struck with those resemblances, which bespeak the one to be a type of the other ⁶.

But the most striking type of the sacrifice of Christ, is to be found in the institution of the passover; the perpetual observance of which among the Israelites was significant, of “the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby,” in the Lord's Supper. The paschal lamb, whose blood sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelites preserved them from death, was surely a most appropriate type of “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” and whose blood, sprinkled on the hearts of His faithful people, cleanseth them Ex. xii. 13.
22, 23.
John i. 29.
Heb. ix. 13,
&c. x. 22.

⁴ Josephus indeed, and with him Rabbi Salomon, and Rabbi Samuel (cited in Berescith Rabba), mention what is here said of Melchizedek as an act of common hospitality; and so Tertullian also (adv. Jud. 3.). But allowing this to be true, it does not thence follow that no *sacrifice* was offered, since it was an ancient custom to join sacrifices to feasts: and we can hardly imagine a priest of the most high God, especially on such an occasion, doing otherwise. Does not Josephus himself imply as much, when he says that, during the feast, he began τὸν Θεὸν ἐὺλογεῖν? A. 1. 10. s. 2.

⁵ St. Paul's silence, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as to the correspondence between Christ and Melchizedek mentioned in the text, need not surprise us, if we consider, that the plan of this Epistle did not require him to point out so much the typical nature of the sacrifice, as of the sacrificer; it being his main object to prove the superiority of the Messiah's priesthood to that of Aaron, shewing that the one was for a time, the other for ever. In referring, therefore, to Melchizedek for this purpose, he only adverts to those points of resemblance which go to prove this superiority. Leonardi Coquæi not. in August. Civ. Dei, xvi. 22. Johnson's Unbloody Sacrifice, pp. 54—58. ed. 1714.

⁶ Gen. xxii. 2; John i. 18;—Gen. xxii. 2; Luke xxiii. 33, Calvary an eminence of Moriah.—Gen. xxii. 4, Christ's crucifixion after His third passover; Gen. xxii. 6, John xix. 17. τὸν τε Ἰσαὰκ ὡς καθοσιωμένον ἱερεῖον ἀλληγορήσας, ἐξελέξατο ἑαυτῷ, τύπον ἐσόμενον ἡμῖν οἰκονομίας σωτηρίου. Clem. Alex. Strom. ii. 5. comp. Pædagog. l. i. c. 5. jux. fin. and Strom. l. i. c. 5. ταῦτα δὲ πάντα τύπος ἐγένετο τοῦ σταυροῦ. Chrysost. in Gen. Hom. 47. s. 3. Quod autem beatus Isaac typum habuerit Domini Salvatoris, pæne nulli habetur incognitum. August. de Temp. Sermon. 78. al. Sermon. Suppos. 10. s. 2. et alibi sæpe; Theodoret. Quest. 73. in Gen.; Prosper Aquit. de Promiss. &c. 1. 17.

LECTURE from sin, which is the cause of death. This typical meaning
 LII. of the paschal sacrifice, as also the mystical import of some
 of the circumstances with which it was commanded to be
 observed, are clearly, though incidentally noticed by St. Paul.
 1 Cor. v. 6, "Know ye not," saith he, "that a little leaven leaveneth the
 &c. whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may
 be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our
 Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast,
 not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and
 wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and
 truth."

Orig. in
 Joan. vol. ii.
 p. 163, ed.
 Huet.

Orig. ut sup.
 140, 141.

Another apt prefiguration of "the Lamb of God, that taketh
 away the sin of the world," is to be found in the daily morn-
 ing and evening sacrifice of the people of Israel; which sacri-
 fice, if we consider that bread and wine were offered with it,
 may be deemed to have been significative also of the continual
 commemoration of the One great Sacrifice, in the Holy Eu-
 charist. "Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the
 altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually.
 The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other
 lamb thou shalt offer at even: and with the one lamb a tenth
 deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten
 oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering.
 And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do
 thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and
 according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour,
 an offering made by fire unto the Lord. This shall be a con-
 tinual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door
 of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where
 I will meet you, to speak there unto thee." Here also are no
 obscure intimations of that divine grace and divine presence
 in the Lord's Supper, which we shall presently have occasion
 to notice. Other types of the Holy Eucharist, besides the
 above, are discerned by the ancient Fathers of the Church, in
 the writings of the Old Testament; but those here given will
 be sufficient for our present purpose. Before, however, pass-
 ing from the types and shadows of the law to the more direct
 and clear announcements of the Gospel, it may be well to
 mention a remarkable passage from the last of the prophets,
 which seems to bear a close relation to our subject. To the

Ex. xxix.
 38, &c.

Jews, now approaching to the full measure of their iniquity, and becoming more and more unworthy to be the peculiar people of God, the prophet Malachi foretels the rejection of themselves and of their polluted sacrifices, and announces the calling of the Gentiles, and the establishment of a pure worship throughout the world, saying, "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering." The word, here rendered "*offering*," is used almost invariably in the Old Testament to denote an unbloody sacrifice or meal offering of fine flour, in opposition to another word, by which animal and bloody sacrifices are distinguished. When used by itself, it includes the drink offering, with which such sacrifices were usually accompanied. Here surely is no obscure intimation of the peculiar worship of the Christian Church, whether we consider the matter of the offering, or the qualifications required in the offerers. Instead of the numerous and costly victims, the blood and smoke and ashes of the Jewish sacrifices, our offering consists of the simple and clean material of bread and wine. Instead of mere formal rites, and material incense, and outward washings, we are to offer therewith a contrite heart, the prayer of faith, and an upright life. This is no private interpretation of the prophet's words. The above application of them is embodied in the earliest Liturgies, and noticed by the ancient Fathers of the Church as a truth universally received.

From these typical and prophetic allusions to the Lord's Supper, contained in the Old Testament, let us now pass onward to the more direct and express accounts delivered in the New Covenant. It appears, then, that two days before the passover Judas Iscariot covenanted with the chief priests, to betray Jesus into their hands. On the following day, after sunset, began (according to the Jewish mode of computation) the 14th of Nisan, or day when the passover should be slain. This was called "the first day of unleavened bread," because then the Jews began to put out all leaven from their houses, that they might eat the passover according to the command-

LECTURE
LII.

Malach. i.
10, 11.

קִרְבָּן קִרְבָּן
θυσία κα-
θάρα.

Gesenius,
s. v.

קִרְבָּן and
קִרְבָּן

Reland.
Antiq. pt. iii.
c. 7.

Liturg.
Clement. in
Apost. Con.
viii. 5.

Liturg.
S. Marc. in
init. oblat.

Just. M.
Dial. cum
Tryph. s. 41.

Tertull. adv.
Marc. iii. 15.
Cyp. adv.

Jud. i. 16.
Chrysost. in
Psal. 95.

s. 2, 3.
Theodoret.
in Psal. 109.

(nobis 110.)
August. Civ.
Dei, xviii.

35; xix. 25.
fin.; Cont.
Adv. Leg. et

Proph. l. 20.
Psal. xxxiv.
18.

Heb. xi. 4.
Psal. xxvi.
6.

Matt. xxvi.
2. 14—16.
Mark xiv. 1.
10, 11.

Ex. xii. 8.

LECTURE ment, and also prepare for the feast of unleavened bread
 LII. which immediately followed. On this day, Jesus “sent Peter
 Ex. xii. 18, and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we
 19. may eat . . . and they made ready the passover. And when
 Luke xxii. the hour⁷ was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles
 7—13, &c. with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have
 desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I
 say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be ful-
 filled in the kingdom of God. And He took the cup, and
 gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among your-
 selves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the
 vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And He took
 bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them,
 saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in
 remembrance of Me⁸. Likewise also the cup after supper,
 saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is
 shed for you.”

Matt. xxvi.
 26, &c.
 Mark xiv.
 22, &c.
 1 Cor. xi.
 23—26.

Such is St. Luke’s account of the institution of this blessed sacrament. With this substantially agree the accounts of St. Matthew and St. Mark; and it is still more closely in accordance with that of St. Paul, who has recorded a remarkable direction of the Saviour’s on the occasion, which is unnoticed elsewhere. On giving the consecrated wine to His Apostles, He added, “This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

1 Cor. xi.
 23—26.

Still confining our attention to the historical survey of the institution, we may hence observe, that it was established and evidently grew out of our Lord’s last passover. The accounts of the four Evangelists seem to shew, that our Lord, in the celebration of this passover, deviated in no important particular of time, or circumstance, from the custom then in use among the Jews. That they were, however, now no longer confined to the strict letter of the original institution in point of time, would appear very probable, if we consider the altered circumstances of the people since the time of Moses, and the limited accommodation of the city and temple, compared with the vast numbers that, in our Saviour’s day, must have there assembled for its celebration. And this leads us

⁷ ὥρας δὲ γενομένης, Matt. xxvi. 20. Mark xiv. 17. ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ, 1 Cor. xi. 23.

⁸ εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, ver. 19; and so 1 Cor. xi. 24.

to a supposition, which is not at variance with the accounts of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, and which at the same time serves to harmonize their narratives with that of St. John, viz., that our Lord celebrated His last passover on the evening which *began*, instead of on the evening which *closed* the paschal day. Thus our Lord, by anticipating the time originally enjoined, did not, as we have endeavoured to shew, deviate from the generally prevailing and justifiable custom of the age in which He lived. Those, who prided themselves on the strict observance of the letter of the law, would doubtless keep the feast at a later hour: and we learn from St. John, that many had not partaken of it at the time that Jesus was brought before Pilate. Passing by the incidents that occurred between the institution of the Lord's Supper and His crucifixion, which have been already noticed, it may suffice to say, that, having first made an oblation of Himself to God under the symbols of bread and wine in the Holy Eucharist, He is then actually slain and sacrificed upon the cross. The time of this awful sacrifice is minutely noted by St. Mark. "And it was the third hour (i.e. 9 o'clock, A.M.), and they crucified Him." And, as if the face of nature frowned upon such wickedness, and the sun would not deign to shine upon those who had refused the light of life, it is written, that, "when the sixth hour (i.e. noon) was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour" (3 o'clock P.M.). "And the sun was darkened." This was one sign of the dying of Jesus on the cross. "And the veil of the temple was rent in the midst:" this was another, shewing that the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was now broken down, and that with the dissolution of the tabernacle of His body was dissolved, from henceforth, all the efficacy of the various services and sacrifices of the Jewish temple. And now, at this awful moment, having commended His spirit into His Father's hands, "He said, it is finished; and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." It is no part of our present purpose, to advert to the deep and comprehensive meaning of these last words of the dying Saviour, beyond observing, that in this one sacrifice all the sacrifices of the law received their fulfilment: but we must not here omit to mention that, in the time of the crucifixion and death of Christ, a remarkable cor-

LECTURE
LII.Theodoret.
in 1 Cor. xi.
23, &c.John xviii.
28.Lect. xix.
Cyp. ad
Cæcil. Ep.
63.

Mark xv. 25.

Jb. 33.
Matt. xxvii.
45.
Luke xxiii.
44, 45.
Sup. p. 224.Eph. ii. 14,
&c.Matt. xxvii.
45—50.
Mark xv.
33—37.
Luke xxiii.
44—46.
John xix.
28—30.

LECTURE response between the typical and the real passover may
 LII. be recognized. The paschal lamb was originally appointed
 Reland. to be killed between the two evenings, i. e. as is generally sup-
 Antiq. Sac. posed, from about three to five o'clock, P.M. Thus we see,
 pt. iii. c. 6. that the true Paschal Lamb expired on the cross, on the very
 16. month, the very day of the month, and about the same hour of
 Joseph. B. J. the day, on which its type was first ordained to be slain.
 vi. 9. 3. Who can fail to adore, in the whole of this wonderful economy,
 that Providence, which makes even the unruly wills and affec-
 tions of sinful men the instruments of His gracious purposes !

If we now revert to the immediate institution of the Lord's Supper, we shall find that, from the tenour of our Lord's discourse on that occasion, He intimated in no doubt-
 Luke xxii. ful terms to His disciples, that what was typified and pre-
 15—18. figured in the Jewish passover, which He was then celebrating
 Comp. Matt. for the last time, was to be fulfilled in His approaching pas-
 xxvi. 29. sion. We see Him also, without any explicit declaration
 Mark xiv. to that effect, virtually substituting one commemorative ordi-
 25. nance for another, the simple and "pure offering" of the
 Gospel for the costly and bloody sacrifices of the law ; as, by a
 Malach. i. like mysterious economy, the washing of regeneration was to
 11. supersede the rite of circumcision. He gave them, as we
 have seen, the blessed bread and wine, as symbols of His own
 body and blood, as significant of the sacrifice now to be made
 upon the cross. And as they kept the passover in memory
 of that sacrifice, by which their forefathers were delivered
 from the bondage and destruction of Egypt, so he enjoined
 them henceforth, to keep this new ordinance in commemora-
 tion of Himself, the true Paschal Lamb, by whose sacrifice
 not only they, but the whole world, might be delivered from
 the slavery and destruction of sin.

Both from our Lord's own words, at the giving of the cup, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me," and from St. Paul's observation upon the same, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come," we gather that this ordinance was to be continually observed in the Church. Accordingly we read in the book of the Acts, that the Apostles and first Christians, immediately after the day of Pentecost, assembled *daily* to partake of this holy sacrament :

Luke xxii.
15—18.
Comp. Matt.
xxvi. 29.
Mark xiv.
25.

Malach. i.
11.

εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν
ἀνάμνησιν,
Luke xxii.
19.
John i. 29.

1 Cor. xi.
25, 26.

Acts ii. 42—
46.

and we find it mentioned on the same authority, that this was their proper worship, the chief end of their assembling together. Daily communion, therefore, seems to have been the practice of the faithful, at least in the apostolic age; a practice that continued, in many parts of the Church, even to the times of Chrysostom and Augustine, when the celebration of divine service was deemed incomplete without this, its chief and crowning act of worship. And even at a later age, when a partial laxity of discipline had crept into the assemblies of the faithful, a weekly commemoration of the sacrifice of the death of Christ was at least observed; whilst excommunication was the penalty attached to those hollow professors of the Gospel, who dared to quit the Church without participating in the holy communion of the body and blood of their Redeemer. They stood, (as must those of our own day who follow their counsel, and adopt their practice,) self-convicted, self-condemned, that they were not "religiously and devoutly disposed," not desirous to shew forth the Lord's death till He come, not willing to obey His touching injunction to His disciples, "This do in remembrance of Me." They were classed with the idiot, the possessed, the unbaptized, the heretic, the profane.

LECTURE
LII.

Just. Apol.
i. s. 67.
Iren. adv.
Hær. iv.
18. 6.
Tertull. de
Jejun. c. 14.
Cypr. Ep.
54. al. 57.
Chrys.
contra Jud.
iii. 4. de
Beat. Philog.
vi. 4.
August.
Serm. 57, in
Matt. vi. s. 7.
contr. Pelag.
l. iv. c. 9. al.
25. Serm.
351, de
Pœn. 7. al. 4.
See also
Bingham,
b. xv. c. 9.

Would that this high, yet sober view of the Eucharist had always been retained, in the Catholic Church of Christ, in its pristine integrity and simplicity. Would that a mistaken desire to exalt it beyond the truth, acting upon a lively and a restless fancy, had never led to the dangerous errors of the Church of Rome in this respect. It was well to invest this sacrament with so awful a dignity, that the faithful might shrink from profaning so great a mystery by light and inconsiderate views concerning it; but it was not well to stretch these views so far, as to compel men, upon peril of damnation, to believe that the bread, used in the sacrament of the Eucharist, was the very body of Christ that suffered on the cross, and that the wine, when consecrated, was the very blood that flowed from the wound inflicted by the Roman's spear.

This belief, that the original nature of the bread and wine ceased, after consecration, to exist, and that another nature took its place, was not the growth of an hour or a day. As

LECTURE the imagination was suffered to mix itself up with the sober realities of evangelical truth,—so, gradually, “the faith once delivered unto the saints” was exchanged for the inventions and doctrines of men. One theologian after another taught, more or less explicitly, that the very body and very blood were locally present in the Eucharist, until, at length, “in the Lateran council held A.D. 1215, the opinion of the real or carnal presence of Christ was not only confirmed, but the word ‘transubstantiated’ was newly coined to express it by; that council determining, that ‘there is one universal Church of the faithful, without which there is none saved; in which Jesus Christ Himself is both priest and sacrifice, whose body and blood in the sacrament of the altar are truly contained under the shapes of bread and wine; the bread being transubstantiated, or substantially changed into His body, and the wine into His blood, by the power of God; that for the perfecting the mystery of our union, we might receive of Him what He had received of us.’”

Concil.
Lateran. 4.
c. 1.
See also
Conc. Trid.
Sess. xiii.
c. 4. can. 2.
Beveridge
on Article
xxviii.

Heb. vii. 27;
ix. 26.

It would be foreign to the object of these Lectures, to enter into any lengthened refutation of this *novel* doctrine of the Church of Rome. We might urge, as a passing remark, that it is an opinion that runs counter to the express evidence of the senses, which refuse to believe in the ubiquity of Christ, as very man sacrificed corporeally in many places at the same time,—and which absolutely contradicts the direct word of Scripture, that Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; whilst the Romish Church declares, that in the sacrifice of the mass He is continually offered up, as the one only oblation for the sins of men.

Clem. Alex.
Pædag. ii. 1.
Knox's
Remains,
vol. ii.
p. 220, 221.
Knox,
ut sup.
p. 193, 194.

We on the other hand, refusing to adopt these comparatively recent dogmas, believe, with the primitive Church of Christ, in the real, invisible spiritual presence of our Redeemer, in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper⁹. We believe, that then and there “the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.” We hold, that a great and a mysterious change takes place in the consecrated bread and wine; a change of character, but not of substance,—just as in any thing or person, con-

⁹ “Etsi necesse est illud visibiliter celebrari, oportet tamen invisibiliter intelligi.” August. in Ps. xcvi. c. 9.

secrated to God's honour or dedicated to His service, there is a peculiar dignity, a more exalted character. A change has indeed passed over it; it ceases to belong to the world; it becomes the exclusive property of the great God of heaven and of earth. Thus in the Eucharist, that which is given by the priest is, in substance, bread and wine; but, in its sacramental nature, it becomes a lively figure of the body and blood of Christ.

LECTURE
LII.

Fittingly, then, may our Church, whilst she refuses to recognize in the Lord's Supper a miraculous conversion of bread and wine into actual flesh and blood, regard the rite itself as *a memorial, a confession, a sacrament, a communion*. She looks upon it as a *memorial*, in that it brings before us a lively remembrance of a world lost in sin, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; through Him pardoned, justified, sanctified, accepted; through Him invested, in this temporal state, with the precious gifts of God's eternal Spirit, and rendered capable of the inheritance of the saints in light. It is a *memorial*, then, of "the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby."

It is a *confession*, in that as often as we eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood, we do "shew the Lord's death till He come." At each faithful communion we pledge ourselves to follow after our Redeemer's steps, to strive, at humble distance, to be "made like unto Him; that, as He died, and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness."

1 Cor. xi.
26.Office of
Baptism.

It is a *sacrament*, in that thus, even as the soldiers of old time, we make a voluntary oath of obedience to Him, who has purchased us with His own precious blood, and to whom we renew our vow, that we will "not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue His faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives' end."

Ib.

It is a *communion* with God, in that threefold character in which He has vouchsafed to reveal Himself to mankind. With the Father, who called us from the dust, and created us, living, thinking, and accountable beings; with the Son, who redeemed us, when our souls were forfeit to His Father's justice, our thoughts debased through our original and actual

LECTURE
LII. sin, our inability to make up our account with God confessed : it is a *communion* too with that Holy Spirit, “who sanctifieth all the elect people of God.” It is a *communion* with our fellow Christians upon earth, a sweet and certain bond between those who are separated from each other’s temporal intercourse by the utmost limits of the globe ;—for thus, in the service of one common Saviour, we recognize this, the one common bond of union. And lastly, it is a *communion* with the saints whom God has called to a foretaste of that perfect rest, which is laid up in store for His own redeemed children ; for thus are our thoughts turned heaven-ward to them, detached from the contemplation of things on earth, and fixed on that invisible world, to which we look as to our last and dearest home.

Do we seek yet more to realize the benefits of this holy sacrament? Let them be detailed in the language of one who, whilst yet in the flesh, lived, as it were, in the companionship, as he walked in the practice, of those departed saints of God, who are the privileged denizens of the now invisible world. “In this holy institution,” says Bishop Jebb, “as in the first sacrament of baptism, a divine infusion, a heavenly grace and virtue are peculiarly conveyed into the soul. In baptism, we originally received this gift of God: by the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, the gift then received is renewed, enlarged, confirmed, strengthened, perfected. By baptismal grace, we first became, properly, temples of the Holy Ghost: by the grace of the Eucharist, we are made special temples, also, of the Son; an habitation meet for the whole three persons of the ever-blessed Trinity. For it is the Eternal Truth Himself who hath said, ‘He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.’ And, in close conformity with our Lord’s saying are the words of our Church, in her communion exhortation. ‘The benefit is great, if, with a true penitent heart, and lively faith, we receive that holy sacrament; for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us.’”

Chrys. in
Joan. Hom.
85. 3.

Bp. Jebb’s
Prac. Theol.
Disc. vi.
p. 104.

Thus does our Church, in conformity with the teaching of

Christ and His Apostles, hold the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be the channel of the highest spiritual blessings, and that it is "eminently, and, in a way of peculiar appropriation, the visible conduit, through which, by the invisible operation of Him who appointed it, is conveyed that special evangelical grace, with which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have conjointly distinguished and blessed the Christian dispensation."

LECTURE
LII.

Knox, ut
sup. p. 235.
See also
Hooker's
Ecccl. Pol.
v. 67. s. 11.
Cyp. de
Cæna, c. vi.

And if these things be so,—if such be the high point of view in which the holy sacraments of Christ have been regarded by the faithful of all Christian ages,—if from the very foundation of our faith, whilst they have looked upon Baptism as the regeneration of the soul, they continued to trust for its nutriment to the body and blood of the Redeemer as offered in the Eucharist,—what shall we say of the light and inconsiderate manner in which too many of the present day regard it?

Must we not mourn over churches thronged with professed disciples, but, comparatively, deserted at the commencement of the Eucharistic Office? Yes,—and we shall marvel as we mourn; marvel, that God's long-suffering has, for these many generations, borne with us as a gainsaying and stiff-necked people, the majority of whom are, confessedly at least if not professedly, despisers of God's altar, and neglecters of His holiest ordinances. We do not shew the like inconsistency in matters connected with the body. In our corporeal maladies, the care is earnest, the anxiety constant. If there be peril, how anxiously will the trembling invalid hang upon each word of his physician, how will he mark his every counsel, abide by his every direction, and treasure up his every caution! Nothing is neglected, that may be supposed to have the power even of palliating disease; nothing refused, that may, even for a season, minister to the body's comfort. How changed, full often, is all this anxious care, when God's ambassador would fain warn him of the more deep-rooted, and more dangerous maladies of the soul; when he would turn him, even as did the Augustines and Chrysostoms of old time, to the necessity of being one with Christ in this His sacramental pledge, before the Spirit of Christ can indeed be looked for to abide within him! How often are subterfuges and excuses then conjured up, to justify him in receding

Chrys. in
1 Ep. ad
Tim.
Hom. v. s. 3.

LECTURE from the Christian's dearest privilege, and most important
 LII. duty! How ingenious are the devices, with which he will

John vi. 53.

of Christ, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." If it were given to one of those holy men, once more to revisit a congregation of modern professed Christians, to witness the crowds that throng our Churches, to mark the breathless interest with which they will hang upon every word that issues from a favourite preacher's lips,—and then, at the conclusion of his discourse, to note the majority hurrying from the house of God, turning their backs to the table of the Lord, and thus voluntarily placing themselves in a situation, reserved of old for those, who laboured under the heaviest censure that the authorities of the Church could possibly inflict;—in what class would he place these lip-servants of their God, and what would be the estimate that he would form of their sincerity? He would rank them with that false one, who doubted first, and then betrayed his Master; with him, who drew back from sharing the dangers of his apostolic companion, because he "loved this present world;" with those, who rested under the condemnation of their Lord, because they were unwilling to take up their cross daily, and follow Him. It would be impossible that he could recognize, as Christians, those who had not the mark of Christ upon them! He could not receive, as faithful disciples of a crucified Saviour, those who steadily refused, or were even partially indisposed, to commemorate that death and passion, which might be to them the means of present peace and sanctification,—a pledge of future reception into His eternal presence!

2 Tim. iv.
10.

LECTURE LIII.

1 Cor. xi. 28.

“Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

RECOGNIZING the sacred and awful character of this mystery, and aware that it is no less dangerous to the unworthy receiver, than salutary to the worthy, the Church closes this summary of her catechetical instruction, by teaching her children, how they may be worthy partakers of that Holy Table; bidding them, with the Apostle, “diligently to try and examine themselves, before they presume to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

LECTURE
LIII.

Communion
Office.

And it is wholesome to be, from time to time, reminded of the obligation, whilst we would avail ourselves of the privilege: because the most advanced Christian requires a constant examination of the inner man, lest the consciousness, of being at peace with God and the world, might engender a spirit of self-complacency, fatal to his growth in the knowledge and practice of true vital religion. And it is wholesome, too, to have the warning, that there are fears inseparable from our very dearest Christian privileges; that no unprepared hand may, with a mistaken or a too confident zeal, lay hold of the most sacred mysteries of God, and be smitten for his transgression, even as was Uzzah, when he essayed to handle the ark of Jehovah's covenant.

2 Sam. vi. 7.

It is, then, with a mother's tenderness, as all-conscious that the adversary is most watchful to deceive where the greatest benefits are to be had, that, before her children are encouraged to “draw near with faith, and to take this holy sacrament to their comfort,” she demands that they should be of a certain character,—men of prayer, of self-communing, and of self-chastisement.

Communion
Office.

LECTURE LIII. And, in order that they may not enter upon this searching of the conscience “lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God,” but that they may come “holy and clean to such a heavenly feast, in the marriage-garment required by God in holy Scripture, and be received as worthy partakers of that holy table,” she has laid down for them the heads of self-examination in so distinct a manner, that the humblest intellect is able to comprehend the bare points of duty, as accurately as the most gifted mind. They are to examine themselves upon five important points: 1. Whether they repent them truly of their former sins; 2. Whether they stedfastly purpose to lead a new life; 3. Whether they have a lively faith in God’s mercy, through Christ; 4. Whether they have a thankful remembrance of His death; and, 5. Whether they are in charity with all men.

Communion
Office.

2 Cor. vii.
10.

It would be difficult to find, in so few words, counsel so touching, or so heart-searching and comprehensive. It is not with repentance, in its ordinary sense, that she would have us rest contented: for it is too sad a truth, that we may repent bitterly of our sins, and yet be no nearer towards attaining that “godly sorrow,” of which the Apostle speaks, that “worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.” The trembling criminal may repent, to agony, of his crime; but where is the profit of his sorrow, if it be wrung from him by the dread of human laws, or by the just terror of a heavenly avenger’s scourge? There must be a deeper and a holier feeling at work than this: for this would be substituting human fears for divine impulses; and be, at best, a rending of the garments, not of the heart. There must be a true repentance for all former sins: and this cannot be built up in the human soul, except the foundations thereof be laid in a solemn conviction of personal sinfulness, as well as of inherited corruption. “Woe is me,” must be the confession, “for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips.” There must be heavy mourning, and astonishment withal; mourning, such as the affectionate child would feel, when his fever-fit of passion has passed away, for having offended a tender and long-suffering parent,—astonishment, now that his eyes are opened to the enormity of his guilt, and to the extent of his ingratitude, in that his parent has borne with his follies, and

Is. vi. 5.

overlooked his waywardness, thus mercifully and thus long. LECTURE
LIII.
There may, and must be, different degrees of penitence, as there are different degrees of criminality: but with a less heart-humbling feeling, than has been thus faintly sketched, true repentance cannot possibly exist.

So too with our purpose of amendment. It is not merely the desire to lead a new life, with which we are thus bidden to be satisfied; nor is it a transient yearning after a better state of things, that can be considered as the child of true repentance: there must be a stedfast and determined purpose;—for when once the mind has gone through the agonizing process that genuine penitence brings with it,—when conscience has ripped up the remembrance of sins long passed, and little thought off, and begins to dwell upon their enormity with a judgment purified by God's word, and, it may be, disciplined by His visitations,—it surely cannot stop, before it has poured itself out in prayer that, as these “preparations of the heart are from the Lord,” so He may vouchsafe Prov. xvi. 1.
to complete His work, and engender in it a stedfast resolution to flee those sins which do most easily beset it; and so, to retrace in godliness those steps, which have heretofore been tracked in crime. There must be a consciousness of the heavy sin, in turning back again to the beggarly elements of the world, from lack of strength of mind to turn aside from its entanglements. “For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” 2 Pet. ii. 21.

In like manner with our faith. It is not only that the Christian is bidden to have a general belief in God's mercy through Christ, but there must be a personal application of this belief; an assurance that Christ died for him, as well as for the rest of men; and that God, who cannot lie, has declared, that He is able and willing to save to the uttermost them who come to Him through this Saviour. How else can there be a lively faith?—a “faith which worketh by love;”—a faith which acts as if it had experienced the truth of all Gal v. 6.
God's precious promises; or, at least, so fully realized them, as to let its simple childlike trust stand to it in the stead of witnessing their accomplishment? A faith like this is, as it

LECTURE were, prophetic ; it brings the soul into a contemplative enjoy-
 LIII. ment of mercies yet to come, and gives it, even in this world,
 Rom. xv. a foretaste of the glories to be revealed hereafter.—Thus,
 13. only, can it be filled with “all joy and peace in believing.”

Further, there must be, not only a vague theoretical know-
 ledge of the benefits which Christ’s death has purchased for
 himself and for the world, but a thankful remembrance of
 them. And is it possible that any one, called after the awful
 name of Christ, can picture to himself, on the one hand, a
 world sunken in iniquity, forfeit to God’s justice, withering
 under His rebuke, dark in religious knowledge, and foul in
 moral practice, “given over,” in a word, “to work all un-
 Eph. iv. 19. cleanness with greediness,”—and, on the other hand, regard
 the self-same world, rescued from God’s wrath by the sacrifice
 of His eternal Son, its sin atoned for, its penalty paid, its
 darkness made light, its ignorance exchanged for God’s own
 teaching, and man himself invested with the capability of
 being remodelled after his Maker’s image ;—is it possible that
 he can draw this contrast, without a most thankful remem-
 brance of God’s infinite mercy, through Christ, to him and
 to all the children of the world ? Sweetly and touchingly has
 an eloquent, though uninspired writer sung of the loving
 mercies of the Lord ; “I know that the Most High is called
 merciful, in that He hath mercy upon them which are not yet
 come into the world, and upon those also that turn to His
 law ; and that He is patient, and long suffereth those that
 have sinned, as His creatures ; and that He is bountiful, for
 He is ready to give where it needeth ; and that He is of great
 mercy, for He multiplieth more and more mercies to them
 that are present, and that are past, and also to them which
 are to come. For if He shall not multiply His mercies, the
 world would not continue with them that inherit therein.
 And He pardoneth ; for if He did not so of His goodness,
 that they which had committed iniquities might be eased of
 them, the ten-thousandth part of men should not remain
 living. And being judge, if He should not forgive them that
 are cured with His word, and put out the multitude of con-
 tentions, there should be very few left peradventure in an
 2 Esdras vii. innumerable multitude.”
 62—70.

And then, all-mindful of the Apostle’s solemn declaration,

that, were even he (gifted man of God as confessedly he was) devoid of charity, he were nothing worth,—the Church counsels her children, that to be “in perfect charity with all men,” is an indispensable requisite for the worthy communicant. We do not mean, by this, to advocate that false spirit of supposed charity, which would gloss over sins abhorrent to God, and injurious to society, mainly because there is not the moral courage to protest against them,—not that indifference to the high dignity of the Catholic Church of Christ, which would look on all Christians as equal in the sight of God, without the smallest reference to their orthodoxy of faith, or purity of practice,—not that lukewarmness, which would be content to abandon creeds, tests, formularies, discipline, and, in part, even principle itself, in the vain hope of conciliating or silencing the adversaries of the faith;—but that true spirit of Christian charity, which consists in an humble endeavour to attain to a kindred spirit with that of the Redeemer, in an effort to become, like Him, lowly, gentle, tender, uncomplaining,—like Him, too jealous of His Father’s honour to pass by, unrebuked, the every day offences against His majesty and laws; and yet, so unresisting, as to be heedless of wrongs offered simply to Himself. It may, and must be, difficult to arrive at such a frame of mind: but, remembering the peaceful elements of which heaven is composed, it requires little argument to prove, that there must be something of the spirit of its inhabitants realized on earth, before her children can hope to be admitted hereafter into the company of God’s perfected saints. These, then, are the main heads of self-examination, upon which the Church directs us solemnly and searchingly to enter, before we presume to approach the table of the Lord. To what does this questioning amount? Heart-searching as it is, it can be little, if any thing more than demanding of the soul, whether it has sinned away its baptismal grace, or whether it has, by God’s blessing, retained it, and acted up to the several duties prescribed by, and included in, its baptismal vow.

Then let the Christian, who is truly desirous to be one with Christ in this Holy Sacrament, enter into strict judgment with his own soul; let him try and prove each movement and impulse of the heart, until he shall have

LECTURE
LIII.
1 Cor. xiii.
1—3.

See Lect.
xxxi. p. 360.

LECTURE ^{LIII.} ascertained, whether he can fully respond to the touching language of our Liturgy, "We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against Thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly Thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings: the remembrance of them is grievous unto us: the burden of them is intolerable."

Communion
Office.

Some such preparation must the Christian undergo; of such a nature must be his self-communing, of such a tenor his humble walk with God, before he can worthily receive the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice. But are we to suppose, that this solemn investigation of self is to be limited to those times and seasons, when we are invited to approach the table of the Lord? Not so:—if there be indeed within the Christian's soul a godly yearning to be one with Christ, and that Christ should be one with him,—if there be an irrepressible earnestness to come to those unspeakable joys, which God has provided for them that unfeignedly love Him,—there will be both the prayer and the striving for grace, to "follow His blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living;"—to walk in this world, as though the eyes of the Lord, and of His mysterious armies of saints and angels, were upon him. Living thus, as it were, in heavenly company, it cannot be, but that, day by day, throughout each hour of his earthly pilgrimage, he will endeavour to demean himself, as one conscious of the unearthly presence in which he moves. Each night, before he lays him down to rest, will he sit in judgment on the thoughts, and words, and deeds, of the preceding hours. It will be to him even as a realization of the dreadful day of his last account. On the one side, he will place God's requirements and his own vows;—on the other, his obedience to the first, and his fulfilment of the second. There will be neither self-deception, nor self-indulgence, in the investigation. He will hold the balance, as though his final sentence trembled in the scale; that so, if his soul should be bidden to awake in eternity, before the morrow shall have recalled it and its companion-body to their daily round of duties, it may not be summoned to the horrors of everlasting

Collect for
All Saints'
Day.

death, but be enabled to meet its God, with an awful surprise indeed,—but, still, with no overwhelming nor despairing dread. LECTURE
LIII.

But there are some, who call themselves Christians, and who are yet manifestly (we might almost say, confessedly) unwilling to enter into this self-communing; for fear, perhaps, lest conscience should cry aloud at their misdoings, and very shame compel them to abandon lusts, too congenial to be renounced without regret,—to conquer passions, too unruly to be quelled without a painful struggle,—and to forego evil habits, so deep rooted as to become a second nature. With regard to such as these, who are resolved to stifle convictions, and to lull to sleep forebodings and misgivings, in order that they may go on still in their favourite iniquities,—it were vain to hope to work upon them by any human argument or exhortation. “The preparations of the heart are from the Lord.” Prov. xvi. 1. His must be the work of conversion; let His, then, be the glory.

There are others, again, not altogether indisposed to enter into that strict self-communing, which will render them as guilty in their own sight, as they are in that of God; and yet who are nervously apprehensive of profaning so great a mystery, by receiving it, as they think, unworthily. The very unworthiness, which marks them out, by their own admission, as deficient in the fulness of God’s inworking grace, is used by such as these, as a plea why they should not seek it through these, His own appointed means. Thus conscience teaches them the existence of the disease; yet, inconsistent with its own deductions, does not lead them onwards to the adoption of the remedy. Fear will suggest the danger of provoking God’s wrath, by receiving this holy sacrament unworthily, and yet they are apparently unconscious of the as great peril, of arousing His indignation by a continuance in a sinful neglect. It were well to remember, that this unworthiness will not, cannot cure itself. It becomes stronger by being unresisted; always on the increase, if no efficient remedy is adopted for its removal. But, may we not truly say, that this sense of personal unworthiness, if it be accompanied with humility and an earnest desire of amendment, should rather bring us to, than keep us from, the table of the Lord,—rather induce us there to seek our comfort, there to look forward for our peace, in the pious hope that God’s strength may there be perfected in our weakness?

LECTURE
LIII.Communion
Office.

If the frequency of our communion were to be decided by the measure of our worthiness, a sentence of perpetual banishment from the presence of the Lord would be passed upon all. Which of us is worthy, in the strict sense of the word? Our Church bids us approach the holy table with the confession, that "we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs" from under it. But, whilst she thus excludes self-boasting and self-righteousness, as if she felt that even the sacerdotal absolution, which follows immediately upon the confession of his sin, were insufficient to reassure the trembling penitent; she places before him such gracious promises, on the part of Christ, of heavenly refreshment,—and such assurances of the unspeakable love of God towards mankind, accompanied with such declarations of the Holy Ghost (through the mouths of His Apostles) of the fulness of God's mercy to mankind,—that it must be a cold heart indeed, which refuses then to lift itself up unto the Lord, and which can find no meetness in giving thanks to Him for these, and all His loving-kindnesses.

Others, again, deprive themselves oftentimes of this blessed sacrament, because they do not find their minds so composed, nor their devotional feelings at the time so fervent, as they could wish. They are conscious of ardent affections towards the creature, and of untiring zeal in the service of those they love; they are proportionably depressed and disheartened, when they contrast the warmth of these earthly feelings with that lessened ardour, which actuates them when they are engaged in the offices and services of their Maker. Not to mention, that there are few greater errors than the making our temperament the test of our religious state, we may further say, that, to abstain from communion on this account, proceeds from a mistaken estimate of the nature of the sacrament. Surely we must regard it as a divinely-instituted conduit of supernatural grace; and, as such, the actual vehicle of Christ's own influences to the capable receiver, independently, it may be, of any agency or co-operation of his own. "In efforts of the heart to rise toward God, *to will* may be most sincerely present with us, when, how to perform that which is good, we find not. Even in an advanced stage of piety, there may be the least power of mental exertion, when its sensible necessity is greatest; for instance, under infirmity

Lecture
xxviii.
p. 329.Lecture lii.
p. 629.

of body or mind ; or when some distressing event has caused, what St. Peter calls, ‘heaviness, through manifold temptations.’ How comfortable, then, amid this ‘weakness of our mortal nature,’ to reflect, not only that God *can* internally aid and strengthen us, by His own secret influences, independently of our active co-operation, but that He has assured us of this unspeakable blessing by such a permanent pledge and means of its accomplishment, as, by its very character and nature, supersedes all co-operation, and requires, solely, the faculty of reception. If only we are athirst, we have here a fountain of life, to which we may indeed come, without money and without price ; and which comes to us without any diluting intermixture, as immediately flowing from the Throne of God, and of the Lamb.”

LECTURE
LIII.
1 Pet. i. 6.

Knox's
Remains,
vol. ii.
p. 211.

If we are privileged to believe, that no infant leaves the baptismal font without the grace of God being imparted to it,—if we thus hold that in the one sacrament we are, as it were, born again from the dead, and receive a new life, why should it be thought a hard thing to believe, (where there is no bar placed by the carelessness or infidelity of the receiver,) in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that the waste of that life is from time to time repaired, the diseases and interruptions of our spiritual life, brought on by sin, effectually remedied and restored? Let us not here resolve, as we do too commonly in other things, to walk by sight and not by faith ; to deny the efficacy and reality of the cure, because we cannot look inward, and discern the precise time and method of its operation. Even “under deep obscurity of mental vision, there may be sincere aspirations of the inner man, the nature of which may be very indistinctly understood by the mind which forms them. In all such instances, therefore, as there is safety in approaching, so we cannot doubt that there will be benefit in receiving the Eucharistic symbols. He who sincerely desires to serve God, and to be possessed of Christian virtues, and who goes to the Table of our Lord, with a wish that he may thereby become more religious and more virtuous, however dark his apprehension of the high and holy mystery, which the sacrament of the Eucharist implies and exhibits, will not, we may well believe, go in vain to that ordinance, for this very reason, because

LECTURE the blessing, which it instrumentally communicates, is so
 { LIII. } exclusively divine. Let there be only a capacity of receiving, and a desire, whether explicit or constructive, to receive influence from above, and, on the ground of a strictly divine operation, there is the most cheering certainty, that no sincere and upright individual will go empty away."

Knox's
Remains,
vol. ii.
p. 253.

Let, then, no groundless fears, and no unexamined scruples, withhold the disciple of Christ from the great benefit and blessing of this holy ordinance. Let him trust in the Lord and draw near with faith, pleading God's promise in his behalf; he will find, ere long, the gentle dews of grace descending gradually upon his soul, refreshing all that was once dry and barren, and bidding the heart rejoice in its new-found source of long looked-for, and gladly-welcomed consolation.

Since such is the invitation held forth unto every Christian disciple,—to the joyful, to the mournful, to the trusting, to the desponding,—it might almost seem, that our Church forbids none to be partakers of this holy sacrament. Not so; for she warns us thus: "If any of you be a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slanderer of His word, an adulterer, or be in malice or envy, or in any other grievous crime; repent you of your sins, or else come *not* to that holy Table, lest, after the taking of that holy sacrament, the devil enter into you, as he entered into Judas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to destruction both of body and soul." To such there is, and must be, much peril in receiving the holy communion: for, if they "presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup," without self-examination, repentance, faith, and charity,—without a settled purpose of amendment of life,—what do they, but insult the majesty of God, and expose themselves justly to that vengeance, of which the Apostle speaks in such awful language: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord?" And again: "for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." It is "as if the very receiving of those holy things into the human person, when defiled by polluting contact, or desecrated by actual irreverence, produced of itself (like the Ark of the Covenant when profanely treated) the calamity or destruction of the offender,"

Communion
Office.

1 Cor. xi.
27—29.

Knox's
Remains,
ut sup.
p. 199.

One word upon this point. Every day's experience proves to us, that many a timid, yet earnest soul is deterred, by this declaration of the Apostle, from approaching the holy table. It may be well, then, to observe, that the word, which we in this passage translate "damnation," is not to be taken, in its popular sense, for everlasting punishment. It means "judgment," according to the more correct rendering given in the margin, or, as it is translated, "condemnation," in the last verse of the same chapter. This judgment too, as the context shews, was temporal and bodily; inflicted, in many instances, to correct and amend the sufferers, and so to preserve them from eternal condemnation. The unworthy receiving, with which the Corinthians were charged, consisted in their "not discerning the Lord's body;" that is, in approaching the sacramental symbols without a due discrimination of their transcendent quality,—in partaking of the Lord's Supper, as they did formerly of their heathen feasts, or as though it were any common meal. Hence arose those "divisions" among themselves, of which the Apostle speaks, that breach of charity and contemptuous neglect of the poor, at the solemnity, which concurred to bring down the judgment of the Almighty upon them.

LECTURE
LIII.Chrysost.
in loc.1 Cor. xi.
18.

But let not the habitual non-communicant conclude, because the unworthy receiving brings a judgment with it, that, by staying away, he is therefore free from the dangers of God's dreadful wrath: far from it. If the unworthy and irreverent intruder into the holiest mysteries of the Most High turns precious food into deadly poison, the provision of life into a very source of death, it must not be forgotten, that they, who habitually disregard and neglect this sacrament, starve, as it were, their souls, and cut themselves off entirely from the means of life. If the former abuse their Christian privileges, the latter forego them,—falling back again to the beggarly elements of that world, which they once renounced,—that world which lieth in wickedness and forgetfulness of God, and for which is reserved that vengeance, which the Psalmist was commissioned to announce, "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

Chrys. de
non Con-
temn. Eccl.
Hom. ix.John vi. 53.
1 John v.
12.

Ps. ix. 17.

Such is the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ;—

LECTURE a pledge, as we have seen, of His love to us ; a bond of union
 LIII.
 1 Cor. vi. between ourselves and Him, and our brethren, who are called,
 15-17. in Holy Writ, the very members of His body. It is an effectual
 sign of grace and peace unto the soul of man,—a mysterious
 compound of duty and of privilege, of joy and hope, of fear
 and love ;—above all, the divinely appointed vehicle of spir-
 itual blessing.

1 Tim. iii.
 16.

How peculiarly blessed, then, is the Christian, in that the
 Everlasting Himself has, not only through the mouth of His
 holy prophets, (as of old,) but through His own beloved Son,
 “God manifest in the flesh,” made known to us His gra-
 cious purposes! More blessed the Christian, than even the
 most gifted under either previous dispensation! More blessed
 than the patriarch ;—who, though he brought his gifts to the
 altar, in the fulfilment of Jehovah’s ordinance, (and so drew
 down upon himself, and on his household, the blessings
 inseparable from a pious heart, and from dutiful obedience,)
 yet still possessed but vague and undefined views of the
 redemption of his soul. More blessed than the Jew ;—who,
 though the solemn majesty of the law was all around him, as
 an ever-present memorial of his covenant-God,—entering, in
 the multiplicity of its ordinances, into every action of his
 political and domestic life,—though the blaze of prophecy
 streamed, as a holy beacon in advance, to warn of blessings
 still to be accomplished,—yet looked, in prospect only, to
 that Saviour, who, by God’s revelation, “is made unto
 us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and re-
 demption.”

1 Cor. i. 30.

More blessed, indeed, are we,—to whom there is no design
 of God left unrevealed, that can minister to our real happi-
 ness or spiritual well-being,—and from whom no knowledge
 is withheld, that can make us wise unto salvation. Verily, we
 of all men may say, “To God the Father, who first loved us,
 and made us accepted in the beloved ; to God the Son, who
 loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood ; to
 God the Holy Ghost, who sheds the love of God abroad in
 our hearts, be all love and all glory, for time and for eternity.
 Amen.”

Ken’s Di-
 vine Love,
 ad finem.

APPENDIX.

FROM SHEPHERD'S "CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL ELUCIDATION OF THE COMMON PRAYER."

CATECHISM is derived from a Greek term, and signifies instruction in the first rudiments of any art or science, communicated by asking questions, and by hearing and correcting the answers. From the earliest ages of the Church, the word has been employed by ecclesiastical writers in a more restrained sense, to denote instruction in the principles of the Christian religion by means of question and answer.

Our Church requires the Catechism "to be learned of every person, before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop." At the time of Confirmation, every one, in the presence of God and of the congregation, renews, with his own mouth and consent, the promises and vows made, in his name, when he was baptized : he ratifies and confirms the same in his own person, acknowledging himself bound to believe and to do all those things which, at his Baptism, his Godfathers and Godmothers undertook for him.

In this open, awful manner must every one, before he can be confirmed, take upon himself the profession of the Christian religion. It is reasonable therefore that he be well instructed in its principles, and understand aright the nature of those doctrines and duties, which he so solemnly declares himself to believe, and engages to perform.

It is evident, even if we had not been expressly told it by Ambrose, that the early Christians derived the custom of catechising children from the general practice of the Jews, who, as Josephus informs us, were particularly careful to have their children instructed in the law, and had in every village a teacher, called the instructor of babes¹. Every child, as soon as he was able to learn, was taught the law till he was ten years of age². After that period, if he were tolerably conversant with the *Pentateuch*, he was instructed in the *Talmud* till the age of fifteen, when he entered upon the *Gemara*, or the interpretation of the more difficult or

¹ To this practice St. Paul seems to allude in Rom. ii. 20.

² Here, and in what follows in this paragraph, I rely upon Buxtorf and Grotius. See Buxt. Syn. Jud. cap. 3.

disputable passages of the sacred text. At the age of thirteen he was publicly examined in a place of worship before an assembly of ten persons, and declared to be "a child of the precept;" that is, he was obliged to observe the six hundred and thirteen precepts, which contained the substance of the *Mosaic* law, and formed a summary of the Jewish religion. Before this, all offences that he might have committed were imputable to his father; but from this period he himself was held responsible for his own conduct, and answerable for his sins. This catechetical examination some have supposed our Saviour underwent in the temple, when He was only twelve years of age; *ingenuity*, according to the Rabbinical proverb, *out-running the command*³.

In the primitive age, children born of Christian parents were commonly baptized in their infancy, and admitted into the catechetical schools, as soon as they were capable of learning the first rudiments of Christianity. The catechetical school was a building adjoining and belonging to the Church; but its site is not determined with precision by any ancient writer. Ambrose at *Milan* catechised in the baptistery. The catechist, who might be of either the highest or lowest order of the clergy, or even a layman, never taught the catechumens in the Church, but in the school of the Church, in some apartment appropriated to the purpose. The instruction given in these schools was not confined to sacred subjects only: in many of them grammar, rhetoric, and other sciences were likewise taught⁴.

Of this description was the famous school of *Alexandria*, in which Jerome says St. Mark the Evangelist was the first catechetical teacher. From the foundation of this Church, there was a continued succession of celebrated doctors. About the year 180, Pantænus was the instructor of Christian children in this school, which, Eusebius remarks, had long before this period been a seminary of sacred learning, and still continued so in his time⁵. Pantænus was succeeded by Clement, who, while he was catechist, composed his celebrated work, still extant, the *Pædagogus*, or *Child's Guide*.

To Clement succeeded Origen, when he was only eighteen years of age, after whom Heraclas was appointed, and he was followed by Dionysius. The illustrious Athanasius likewise, and Didymus and Arius, successively held this office. At *Cæsarea*, *Antioch*, *Rome* and *Carthage*, were similar schools. At *Jerusalem*, Cyril wrote his *Catecheses*, while he was catechist of that school, and a young man, as Jerome and others have remarked.

Before I proceed to enquire what was the substance of the ancient Catechisms, and to examine how far our own form corresponds with them, it may be proper to say something of the condition and treatment of the heathen catechumens, who, at the times of which I have been speaking, formed the great body of persons that were catechised. These were in general adults, and partly proselyted to the Christian faith; but till they

³ Grotius and others.

⁴ See Bingham on Catechists, Catechisms, and Catechetical Schools, with the writers to whom he refers.

⁵ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. v. cap. 10.

had obtained a more perfect knowledge of the Christian system, it was not thought expedient that they should be admitted to be baptized. In the Apostolic age indeed, and at the first plantation of the Gospel, the interval between conversion and baptism was very short. What St. Luke relates of Cornelius, of the Ethiopian eunuch, and of the jailor at *Philippi*, sufficiently proves, that catechising and baptism closely accompanied each other. In subsequent times, the term of probation was prolonged, though it was always, in some degree, regulated by the proficiency and good conduct of the catechumen. The too hasty and indiscriminate admission of converts was found by experience to fill the Church with immoral characters, and to increase, especially when persecution raged, the number of apostates. The Pagan catechumens were therefore regularly disciplined and prepared for baptism.

Two years seem to have been the most common period of probation and instruction. Thus, while time was given to make trial of their conversation, and opportunity allowed for weaning themselves from their former errors, they were gradually instructed; first in the more simple and common principles of religion, and afterwards in the more mysterious articles of the Christian faith.

The Pagan catechumens were divided into at least two classes, the imperfect and perfect, or the novices and the proficient. The more ignorant of the former were only not quite heathens, and numbers of the latter had made such progress in Christian knowledge, and given such proofs of their sincerity and orderly conversation, as qualified them to become candidates for baptism at the next public administration of that rite. These were accordingly accepted, and appointed to be baptized at the approaching festival of Easter or Whitsuntide. The former class were frequently distinguished by the name of *Hearers*, from their being permitted to hear sermons preached, and the Scriptures read in the Church. The others were called *Genuflectors* or *Prostrators*, from their being allowed to hear the prayers likewise, and to receive the minister's benediction. At the celebration of the Eucharist, both were excluded. The perfect, they that had been examined for baptism and approved, devoted the season of Lent, or the twenty days that preceded the time of baptism, to abstinence, confession and prayer, and to hearing expositions of the Creed. At this time they were likewise taught the responses to be made at baptism; the form in which they were to renounce the devil, and covenant with Christ.

Our form or manner of catechising is, like that of the primitive Church, by question and answer. Thus Philip catechised the eunuch, and thus adults in general were catechised prior to their admission to baptism. "Catechism," says Clement of *Alexandria*, "is the knowledge of religion, first delivered to the ignorant by the catechist, and again repeated by them;" and the Preface to the *Roman Catechism* remarks, that "the manner of the Apostolic catechising, which in the mysteries of baptism the Church still imitates, was by questions and answers."

In manner and substance, likewise, our Catechism corresponds with ancient forms. Clement styles the Catechism a *concise instruction*; the catechumens being obliged to learn by heart only the Renunciation, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, which they repeated at their baptism. They were principally catechised in the articles of the Creed, which were expounded at considerable length; and the Lord's Prayer was likewise commonly explained to them. Though the Ten Commandments are not expressly mentioned, as constituting a part of any primitive Catechism, yet it is not improbable that they were taught to young Christians; for they that were baptized promised to live according to God's commandments, and the catechumens were always instructed in moral duties.

In the more ancient British Church likewise, the Exposition of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer formed the principal part of catechising. Bede informs us, that in his time "converts were taught the Creed;" and the Saxon Canons direct the Clergy "to learn and to teach the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed," which were the Catechism of that age. Some of our old councils enjoin the Ten Commandments to be taught and explained to the people, which shews that they have long had a place in the Catechism of our National Church. But under the darkness of popery all rational religious instruction was suppressed. "It served the crafty purpose of the Bishops of *Rome*," as one of our homilies⁶ justly complains, "to keep all people so blind, that they, not knowing what they prayed, what they believed, what they were commanded by God, might take all their commandments for God's. As they would not suffer the Holy Scriptures or Church Service to be used or had in any other language than the Latin, so were very few, even of the most simple people, taught the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, otherwise than in Latin, which they understood not; by which universal ignorance, all men were ready to believe whatsoever they said, and to do whatsoever they commanded." . . .

To provide a catechism in English, for the instruction of all, and more especially of the youth, was one of the earliest cares of Cranmer and his venerable associates. Accordingly, the injunctions given by the authority of the king's highness to the Clergy of this realm, which were probably prepared by the Archbishop himself, and which Cromwell published in 1536, soon after he was created Henry's vicegerent for all jurisdictions ecclesiastical within this realm, order, "That the Deans, Parsons, Vicars and others having cure of souls any where within this deanery⁷, shall, in their sermons and collations, diligently admonish the fathers and mothers, masters and governors of youth, being within their cure, to teach, or cause to be taught, their children and servants, even from their infancy, their *Paternoster*, the Articles of our Faith, and the Ten Commandments, in their mother tongue: and the same so taught, shall cause the said youth oft to repeat and understand. And to the intent that

⁶ Sixth and last part of the Homily against Disobedience, and Wilful Rebellion.

⁷ The Vicegerent appointed a Special Commissary to visit the people and clergy of each deanery.

this may be the more easily done, the said Curates shall in their sermons deliberately and plainly recite of the said *Paternoster*, the Articles of our Faith, and the Ten Commandments, one clause or article, one day ; and another, another day ; till those be taught and learnt by little and little ; and shall deliver the same in writing, or shew where printed books containing the same are to be sold, to them that can read or desire the same⁸." But such was the ignorance of the age, and so untoward were the circumstances which occurred in Henry's reign, that the injunctions could in few instances be obeyed : for from the *Articles to be enquired of in the king's majesty's visitation*, issued in the first year of Edward, Sept. 1, 1547, and eleven years after Cromwell's visitation, we may, I think, discover, that the generality of the people still required to be taught even the Lord's Prayer. Of Parsons, Vicars and Curates, Edward's commissioners are directed to enquire, " Whether they have not diligently taught, upon the Sundays and Holidays, their parishioners, and especially the youth, the *Paternoster*, the Articles of our Faith, and the Ten Commandments in English." And " Whether they have expounded and declared the understanding of the same. *Item*, whether they have, every Lent, required their parishioners in their confession, to recite their *Paternoster*, the Articles of our Faith, and the Ten Commandments."

The royal injunctions given this year (1547), to both the Clergy and Laity, order, " that every holiday⁹ throughout the year, when they have no sermon, they (all Deans, Archdeacons, Parsons, Vicars, and other persons ecclesiastical,) shall, immediately after the Gospel, openly and plainly recite to their parishioners in the pulpit, the *Paternoster*, the *Credo*, and the Ten Commandments, in English, to the intent the people may learn the same ; exhorting all parents and householders to teach their children and servants the same, as they are bound by the law of God and in conscience to do." And one of the Articles to be enquired of at Cranmer's visitation of the diocese of *Canterbury*, in the second year of Edward, 1548, was, " Whether Parsons, Vicars and Curates, have not every holiday, when they have no sermon, immediately after the Creed, openly, plainly and distinctly recited to their parishioners in the pulpit, the *Paternoster*, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, in English." Another article was, " Whether they have admonished their parishioners, that they ought not to presume to receive the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, before they can perfectly rehearse the *Paternoster*, the Articles of the Faith, and the Ten Commandments, in English."

In 1548, the Catechism (excepting what at the end of it relates to the Sacraments) was drawn up nearly in its present form, and, together with the other Offices of the Church, ratified by Parliament. At the first

⁸ The English Catechism,—that is, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments,—was probably first published; not long before the issuing of these injunctions.

⁹ That is, on every day appointed to be kept holy : on Sundays and the other Festivals.

revisal of the Book of Common Prayer, this response, "The same which God spake in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," was prefixed to the Commandments; and the word *child*, in the question before the Lord's Prayer, was substituted for *son*. Both of these books, and those published in Elizabeth's reign, read, "Forsake the devil, and all his works *and* pomps, *the* vanities of the wicked world," &c. From the time of Charles (1625) to the last review, the words were, "Forsake the devil and all his works, *the* pomps *and* vanities of the wicked world." In 1661, "*forsake*" was changed for "*renounce*," and "*the vanities of the wicked world*," for "*the vanity of this wicked world*." At this review, likewise, the words, "The king, *and all that are put in authority under him*," were substituted for "*the king and his ministers*;" the form of expression used in all the preceding books.

After the conference held before James at *Hampton Court*, between the Episcopalian divines and the delegates of the Puritans, at which the latter complained that the Catechism was defective, in not settling the nature and number of the Sacraments, all the questions and answers concerning the Sacraments were added. This part was drawn up by Bishop Overall, then Dean of *St. Paul's*, approved by the Bishops, and annexed to the Catechism by order of the king. At the review of 1661, it was confirmed by the Convocation and the Parliament with two variations. The answer to "*What is the outward visible sign or form in Baptism?*" was, *Water, wherein the person baptized is dipped, or sprinkled with it, in the name*," &c. And to the question, *Why then are infants baptized*, &c., the answer was, *Yes, they do perform them by their sureties, who promise and vow them both in their names, which when they come to age*, &c. The present answers are more simple and less embarrassed.

Having thus minutely noticed every alteration made in the Catechism since its first compilation in 1548, I ask, what now becomes of all the various forms¹, through which an ingenious writer declares it to have

¹ In the sketch of the History of the Catechism, prefixed to his elegant Lectures, Mr. Gilpin has been very inaccurate. In the first page he observes, that "in the beginning of the Reformation it was thought sufficient to begin with such common things, as were acknowledged equally by Papists and Protestants. The first Catechism therefore consisted simply of the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer; and it was no easy matter to bring even those into general use." Here, before we are well introduced into it, we lose sight of the Catechism, to recover it no more. The remaining part of the history is founded on error, and has no relation to our established Catechism. Instead of the *English Catechism*, or the instruction to be learned by every person before he be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed, it is evident, that the author is describing, without either intending or knowing it, a *Catechism in Latin for the use of Schools*, licensed by Edward, improved by Nowel, in the reign of Elizabeth, and afterwards corrected and sanctioned by the Convocation. The Catechism published in 1553, could not be "the first model of that which we now use," for that had been before this period twice sanctioned by Parliament, and accordingly published in 1549 and 1552; and it is sufficiently evident that *Nowel's Catechism* (which Mr. G. erroneously states to have been published in 1563) was not "our Catechism nearly in its present form."

Of this Latin Catechism, as I have entered upon the subject, I shall give a farther account. By letters patent, dated May 20, 1553, about six weeks before

passed? They existed only in his imagination: for if we do not reckon the addition, made in the reign of James, scarce a single office has undergone fewer or less important changes, than the Catechism.

his death, Edward commanded schoolmasters to teach their scholars a Catechism, entitled *Catechismus, Christianæ disciplinæ summam continens*. Who was the author we cannot be certain. The work has been ascribed, and perhaps rightly, to Poynt, who was Bishop of Winchester during Gardiner's deprivation; and by some to Nowel, probably because he afterwards either revised it, or wrote another upon the same plan. The king says, "it was made by a certain pious and learned man, and presented to him; and that he committed the examination of it to certain bishops and other learned men, whose judgment was of great authority with him." These, I suppose, were Cranmer, Ridley, and the divines, who in the preceding year had been employed in drawing up the *Articles of Religion*. The book was probably recommended to the king by Cranmer, whose object was by Catechisms, Articles of Religion, and plain expositions of fundamentals, to instil right principles, and to eradicate Popery.

In this year, the Synod likewise approved a Catechism, which I think we may fairly conclude to have been the same with the preceding; for we find no mention of any other; and a bill introduced by the Prolocutor of Mary's first Convocation declares it to be a production *pestiferous and full of heresies*.

Of this Catechism we hear no more till the third or fourth year of Elizabeth's reign, when we find that Nowel, Dean of *St. Paul's*, had, by the advice of Cecil, composed upon its model a Catechism; in which, as he states himself, "he had taken pains, as well about the matter of the book, that it might be consonant unto the true doctrine of the Scriptures, as also, that the style might agree with the purity of the Latin tongue." In 1562 (the same year in which our present Articles of Religion were agreed upon), Nowel's Catechism was presented in MS. to the Convocation, who examined it with minute attention, and, after making several alterations, unanimously sanctioned the performance by their synodal authority, and recommended it to public use. Nowel, having received the book interlined, and in some parts blotted, caused the whole to be transcribed, and sent the fair copy to Cecil; "not," he informs him, "in his own name, as afore, but in the name of the Clergy of the Convocation, as their book, seeing it was by them approved and allowed." The MS. lay in Cecil's hands for above a year. It was then returned to Nowel with some learned notes upon it, and remained with him till 1570, when it was published, and dedicated to the two archbishops, and the Bishop of London by name, and to all the bishops. It was reprinted in 1572, and again in 1578, and for the benefit of students translated, by the dean's order, into English and Greek. The Latin title is, *Christianæ pietatis prima institutio ad usum scholarum Latine scripta*.

This Catechism was intended not merely for the use of schools; it was likewise meant to be a guide for the younger clergy at least, in the study of theology, and to afford to Protestants abroad, in contradistinction to the tenets of the sectaries, a sort of public standard; a systematic summary and authentic record of the reformed religion professed in England. Though Nowel's Catechism was directed against the corrupt doctrines of *Popery*, it did not favour the principles of the *Puritans* or *Precisians*; and of course the recommending of it to the perusal of the Clergy gave inexpressible offence to the ministers and leaders of that tribe, which was in general ignorant and conceited, discontented and turbulent, restless, rancorous and revengeful. Cartwright, in his *Admonition to the Parliament*, written with the professed design of excluding the Liturgy, and of subverting at least the government of the Church by Bishops (whom, in his usual scurrilous manner, he calls "a remnant of Antichrist's brood," and the Liturgy "an abominable book") affectedly complains, that "now Ministers, like young children, must be instructed and learned by Catechisms;" and on the margin he was provoked to display as a sneer these words, "Ministers of London enjoined to learn Mr. Nowel's Catechism." To this Whitgift, in his answer to Cartwright's dangerous and seditious publication, gravely replied, "That Catechism, which you in derision quote in the margin, is a Book fit for you to learn also: and I know no man so well learned, but it may become him to read and learn that learned and necessary Book." Some years after this, Bishop Cooper, in his *Admonition to the people of England*, written in answer to

We have many excellent explications of the Catechism, one or more of which must be presumed to be in the possession of all who are likely to look into this volume. I have long thought Secker's Exposition to be the production best calculated for general use; though some of the smaller tracts, distributed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, may be better adapted for the instruction of the more ignorant, whether infants or adults. Between the Lectures of Secker and Cyril's Catechetical Discourses, there is in many points an intimate analogy. I fancy that I discover an analogy more intimate, than many will be disposed to admit. Of his eighteen discourses Cyril devoted the last thirteen to the Exposition of the Articles of the Apostles' Creed, and Secker has given us twelve lectures on the same subject. The title of Cyril's fifth discourse, which immediately precedes the Exposition of the Apostles' Creed, is *De Fide*, concerning faith: that of Secker's fifth lecture, which likewise precedes his Exposition of the Creed, is Grounds and Rules of Faith. The preliminary discourses of Cyril, not unlike those of Secker, treat of repentance, renunciation and remission of sins, of the necessity of doing good works, and leading a holy life, and of the nature, necessity, and benefits of baptism. Cyril's discourses are addressed to candidates for baptism, Secker's to those who had been baptized in their infancy.

Of the Rubrics after the Catechism.

The first Rubric enjoins, that "The Curate of every parish shall diligently upon Sundays and Holy-days, after the second Lesson at Evening Prayer, openly in the Church instruct and examine so many children of his parish, sent unto him, as he shall think convenient, in some part of this Catechism."

Our first book required the curate once in six weeks at least, on some Sunday or Holiday, to instruct such children as should be sent to him, half an hour before even-song, in some part of the Church Catechism. Bucer objected that the interval of six weeks was too long: in *Germany*, he remarked, many Churches exercised the children in the Catechism three days in the week, of which Sunday was one; and he recommended that in England it should be taught on every Sunday and Holiday. Accordingly the Rubric in Edward's second Book was modelled, as it stands at present, excepting only that the time of catechising was, at the last review, appointed to be after the Second Lesson at evening prayer, instead of half an hour before.

Bishop Cosens has observed, that the Rubric is expressed in indefinite terms; and he is of opinion, that a parochial clergyman is not obliged by it to catechise on every Sunday and Holiday, but only as often as is necessary, according to the number of his parishioners, who may stand in

Martin Mar-prelate, said, "For a Catechism, I refer them to that which was made by the learned and godly man Mr. Nowel, Dean of *St. Paul's*, received and allowed by the Church of *England*, and very fully grounded and established upon the word of God. There may you see all the parts of true religion received, the difficulties expounded, the truth declared, the corruptions of the Church of *Rome* rejected.—*Strype*.

need of Catechetical instruction. And this is one of the Rubrics which, according to Archdeacon Sharp, require to be understood with limitations, or at least will fairly admit of them. "No obligation," he observes, "can be urged from hence, that ministers should catechise on all Sundays and Holidays, but that if they do it as often as occasions of their parishes require, and do it on such days and at such times as are here specified, and shew their diligence herein, so far as their diligence is necessary in this respect to the faithful discharge of their duty in the place where they officiate; that then they fulfil both the intention and the letter of the Rubric."

The Canon, however, is more explicit than the Rubric. It enjoins, that "the minister upon every Sunday and other Holiday, shall, for half an hour or more, examine and instruct the youth and ignorant persons of his parish, in the Ten Commandments, the Articles of Belief, and the Lord's Prayer; and shall diligently hear and teach them the Catechism, set forth in the Book of Common Prayer."

The Rubric of 1662, which is now to be adhered to, where it differs from the Canon, orders the catechising to be performed after the second lesson, that is, nearly in the middle of the evening office. One principal object of the alteration was, it has been said, that persons more advanced in years might, as well as the youth, receive benefit from the minister's exposition; and that servants and children might be excited by the presence of their masters and parents, to pay more diligent attention to his instructions. These good intentions, however, have been generally disappointed, and at present the catechising of youth must either be too frequently neglected, or many of the Churches in the evenings will be deserted. In the early ages of Christianity, catechising was never performed in the Church; neither did it in England, till after the Restoration, interfere with the public worship. Were a separate time allotted for catechising, as was formerly done, the youth would be freed from the embarrassment, which they experience, when called upon by the minister to answer interrogatories in the midst of a numerous congregation: and it is perhaps desirable, that the practice of catechising children and servants early in the afternoon, or before the evening service, should be again revived. After all, I conceive, that what we have to complain of, is not so much the awkwardness of the time in some particular places, as the too general neglect of the duty. The early Fathers insist much upon the importance and necessity of catechising. The extreme care that was taken in the primitive Church to instruct the catechumens in the principles of Christianity is generally known, and its beneficial effects were as generally experienced.

It was principally by catechising, as Hegesippus observes, that the religion of Jesus was in a few years spread over the greater part of the known world: and, however individuals or societies may have differed on other points, on the utility and necessity of catechising all have agreed, both ancients and moderns; Europeans, Asiatics and Africans; Greeks and Latins; Papists and Protestants; Lutherans and Calvinists; Church of England-men and Dissenters. Luther, in the beginning of the Reforma-

tion, wrote two Catechisms. The duty which he prescribed to others, he likewise performed himself; and assures us, that catechising afforded him more delight, than the discharge of any other ministerial duty. The same care was taken by Calvin, and other eminent Reformers abroad.

Nothing indeed contributed more to the enlargement of the Protestant faith, than the diligent catechising practised by the reformed divines. To the truth of this the Romanists themselves bear witness. In their preface to the Catechism set forth by order of the Council of Trent, they complain, that "the age is sadly sensible what mischief they (the Protestants) have done the Church (of Rome) not only by their tongues, but especially by those writings, called Catechisms."

The Council was sensible, that catechising was the most efficacious mode of preserving their religion; and therefore they composed the Roman Catechism, which they enjoined the priests to teach to the people.

The second Rubric requires, that "all fathers, mothers, masters and dames, shall cause their children, servants and apprentices (which have not learned their Catechism), to come to the Church at the time appointed, and obediently to hear, and be ordered by the curate, until such time as they have learnt all that is here appointed for them to learn."

The words of the Canon are nearly the same; it adds, "If any minister neglect his duty herein, let him be sharply reprov'd; if he shall willingly offend therein again, let him be suspended; if so the third time, then excommunicated. And likewise if any of the said fathers, mothers, masters or mistresses, children, servants or apprentices, shall neglect their duties, as the one sort in not causing them to come, and the other refusing to learn, as aforesaid, let them be suspended by their ordinaries (if they be not children); and if they so persist by the space of a month, let them be excommunicated." The Canons of 1571, reprinted by Sparrow, required every Rector, Vicar or Parish Priest, to return to the Bishop, or to his Chancellor, every year, within twenty days of Easter, the names of such parents and masters as neglected to send their children at the appointed times to be catechised, and the names of all who were above fourteen, and had not come to the sacrament. They were to warn not only youth, but persons of maturer age, that it was provided by the laws of the land, that none should be admitted to marry, or to be sponsor for a child at the font, or to receive the sacrament, who had not a competent knowledge of the Catechism²; and further to enforce this, it was one of the articles which was exhibited, in order to be admitted by authority³; "That he, whose child, at ten years old and upward, was not able to say the Catechism, should pay ten shillings to the poor's box; the like penalty to be inflicted upon masters and mistresses, who had servants of fourteen years and upwards, that could not say the Catechism by heart."

² Sparrow's Coll. p. 232, 233. Quivis Rector, &c.

³ Gibson's Codex, p. 453.

THE END.



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